

**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
EXAMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

OPEN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD Thursday 26th OCTOBER 2023, 10.30 Am via MS Teams

Present	Clark, Andrew	AC	Chair, Co-Chair of AQSC , Academic Director of UG studies
	Musson, Eleanor	EM	Secretary, Senior Project Officer
	Pacelli, Nisia	NP	Assistant Secretary, Admin Officer
	Bayley, Lynne	LB	Senior Policy Advisor (nominee)
	Davies, David	DD	Representative of Faculty Education Committee
	Fearn, David	DF	Representative of Faculty Education Committee
	Franklin, Daniel	DFr	Associate Professor (Coopted Member)
	Griffin, Lee	LG	Academic Director of PGT studies
	Higgins, Andrew	AH	Director of Student Administrative Services
	Latimer, Jo	JL	Examinations Manager
	MacDowell, James	MDJ	Representative of Faculty Education Committee
	Micklewright, Joey	MJ	Representative from Timetabling Team
	Nakariakova, Natasha	NN	Representative from Academic Technology Team
	Roffe, Holly	HR	SU Education VP Sabbatical Officer
	Schwartz-Leeper, Gavin	GSL	Deputy Dean of Students
Strelluf, Christopher	CS	Representative of Faculty Education Committee	
In attendance	Cruickshank, Sam	SCr	Business Analyst
	Green, Sarah	SG	Head of Business Change
Ref	Item		
001.EC.23-24	Welcome and permission for recording of meeting. The Chair welcomed all members and requested permission for recording. Agreed.		
002.EC.23-24	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Sharon Miles, Chris Rogers, Michael Pounds, Phil Young		
003.EC.23-24	Declarations of Interest No new declarations were made.		
004.EC.23-24	Minutes of meeting held on 31st October 2022 The minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2022 were received and approved.		
005.EC.23-24	Matters arising from last meeting held on 31st October 2022 The Committee received verbal updates on current live actions from previous meeting (005.EC.23-24_Live Actions 23-24); updates on actions were as per the action log at the end of these minutes.		
006.EC.23-24	Chair's Business The Committee received and noted the following updates from the Chair: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was mentioned that the Examinations Committee would be reporting to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) and any decisions would be cascaded as appropriate. - Early release of the examinations timetable: it was commented that an in-depth discussion would be needed around this topic as it was reported as one of the main priorities in the Student Union list. No further comments were added.		

007.EC.23-24	<p>Membership and Terms of Reference 2023/24</p> <p>The Committee was informed that the Terms of Reference and the Membership for 23/24 of the Examinations Committee were recently approved by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC). There since had been a further request to change the membership, which would be dealt with by Chair's action.</p> <p>No further comments were added.</p>
Main Items	
008.EC.23-24	<p>Report on examinations 2022-23</p> <p>The Committee received the Report on examinations 2022-23 (008.EC.23-24) and was presented by Andrew Higgins, Director of Student Administrative Services.</p> <p>The key discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised concerns around the increased numbers of rooms required and related increased numbers of invigilators needed for face-to face exams. - Confirmed there were no issues about exams venue booking and noted that both Junction Halls would be used at their full capacity in 23/24. - Reported that the current scheduling software package (WASP) will be replaced by a new system called "EXAM" and the project team is currently testing the relevant functionalities to be fully operating by next spring. - Emphasised the need to consider the feasibility of an early release of the examinations timetable although it was appreciated that it would be not possible for 23/24 given the introduction of a new software and related challenges. - Noted that there was no further progress about the option of having online exams on campus. Also, reported that a feasibility study was commissioned to Estates Team back in November 2022 to look at a digital enablement of Junction Halls. No further updates about the status. - Commented that the issue around online exams on campus was raised at higher lever in several occasions but it seemed to be stuck somewhere and not able to progress although the various concerns raised by the wider academic community. <p>No further comments were added.</p>
009.EC.23-24	<p>Scheduling Constraints 23/24</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the following papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 009.a.EC.23-24_ Scheduling Constraints - 009.b.EC.23-24_ List of approved Constraints. <p>The item was presented by Jo Latimer, Examinations Manager and the key discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted that the exam timetable was created taking in consideration more than 250 constraints set by the Departments. - Emphasised the need to avoid increasing the number of constraints for 23/24 - Noted that Departments were made aware of this limitation via a recent email about ATP returns. - Acknowledged MMA team used to be extremely flexible in accommodating Departments requests. However, given the upcoming change in scheduling software, they would be no longer able to guarantee such flexibility. - Questioned how many changes were recently requested after timetable publication and the reasons provided in support of the request. JL reported that the number of changes were 50 circa and examples of reasons were: sickness, annual leave, marking issues, changes in students' number taking the exam, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restated the procedure previously approved that any change to the current constraints list should be discussed with MMA Team and approved by the Chair of the Examinations Committee. <p>Decision: The Committee confirmed the current list of Scheduling Constraints for the academic year 23/24 and reiterated the procedure that any change to the approved list should be discussed with MMA Team and approved by the Chair of the Examinations Committee.</p>
010.EC.23-24	<p>23-24 exam periods schedule and dates of publication of the related exam timetable</p> <p>The Committee received the document 23/24 Exam periods schedule and dates of timetable publication (010.EC.23-24) and the key discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noted that an early publication of exam timetable is not feasible for the current academic year as the scheduling process is heavily impacted by other admin processes i.e module registration/module deregistration. - Holly Roffe, Representative of Student Union expressed reservations about the current timeline for publishing exams dates and they strongly recommended a revision of the current approach aiming to an early release of the exam timetable. Additional concerns raised were about exam timetable accessibility and cost of living, particularly for students with disability. - Agreed to arrange a meeting to discuss medium-long term solution around the issue of early publication of exams dates. Required attendees would be AC, AH, JL, HR. <p>Decision: The Committee agreed to investigate the issue related to an early publication of exams dates and a tailored meeting will be arranged with the following members AC, AH, JL, HR.</p> <p>Action: NP to arrange a meeting to investigate the issue related to an early publication of exams dates with the with the following members AC, AH, JL, HR.</p>
011.EC.23-24	<p>Calculators permissible in examinations</p> <p>The Committee received the paper 011.EC.23-24_Calculators during Examination and it was presented by Jo Latimer, Examinations Manager.</p> <p>The key discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requested a policy revision to give a clear indication to the Examination Team and Invigilators about what kind of calculators would be allowed during the exam. - The Chair commented he would have expected to receive a detailed proposal to make a decision and he felt the Committee had not been given enough information to proceed with a discussion. - Holly Roffe, Representative of Student Union, commented that any decision about calculators should take in consideration the costs associated for students. - Pointed out the need to investigate further what is the view of Departments about calculators and they preferred choice of a specific model. - Questioned whether the University should be able to provide them during the examination and what other Universities are currently doing in terms of policy and operational approach. <p>Decision: The committee felt the paper needed more consultation with departments and requested a concrete proposal about what specific calculators would be recommended to be provided at a later date' (011.EC.23-24)</p>
012.EC.23-24	<p>Reduction of completion period for controlled condition timed examinations with Student Chosen Fixed Start and End Times Within a 24-Hour Period</p> <p>The Committee received the paper 011.EC.23-24 and the key discussions were as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reported that at the Education Committee in June 2022, it was decided that academic departments should be discouraged from using controlled condition examinations where the student chooses when to initiate a fixed start and end time assessment within a 24-hour period. - Commented that Students should be discouraged from working through the night for mental health reasons, and because they risk having exams back-to-back or overlapping (if they have been allocated extra time) - Holly Roffe, Representative of Student Union, mentioned that 55% of students are also part time workers and online exams, especially the 24-hour window, are positively considered because of their flexibility. - Noted that IT support is only available office hours/weekdays, and this was a key reason for suggesting an 8-hour window. - Emphasised the need to implement a clear communication with student as it would be their responsibility the way in which they plan their time, whether they have another exam or work commitments. - Suggested to reduce the completion time to 21 hours and agreed to draft a communication for the affected students to avoid issues and misunderstanding in terms of duration during the examination. <p>Decision: The committee agreed to reduce the completion period for controlled condition timed examinations with Student Chosen Fixed Start and End Times to a 21-Hour Period.</p>
013.EC.23-24	<p>Operational issues created by departments' use of divisions.</p> <p>The Committee received the paper 013.EC.23-24 for information only. Sarah Green (Head of Business Change) and Sam Cruickshank (Business Analyst) were in attendance to explain operational issues where a single paper is divided into parts and students would be sitting different parts depending on the modules they take. The team is working with Chemistry Department to identify a suitable solution for next Summer i.e. alterations of MAP records; using different paper codes. There were ongoing conversations with the Department, and they were wishing to reach a conclusion relatively soon.</p>
014.EC.23-24	<p>Invigilation arrangements for Academic Session 2023/24</p> <p>The Committee received the paper 014.EC.23-24 for information only and it was presented by Andrew Higgins, Director of Student Administrative Services.</p> <p>The key discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirmed that financial resources to support the summer period in 2024 would be available and it is estimated that the cost related to 50% of support invigilators would be covered. - Reported that there were various reasons for not providing the same financial support for other periods i.e. current preferred examination model is on-line; - Noted that the invigilators' demand for other exam periods is less contentious although JL pointed out that for some Departments even January and April could be challenging sessions due to the high number of students i.e. Maths - Strongly recommended to investigate further the opportunity to get additional financial resources for invigilation to cover other exam periods <p>Action: AH to investigate the feasibility to get additional financial resources for invigilation to cover other 23/24 exam periods.</p>

015.EC.23-24	<p>Use of ear plugs in examinations.</p> <p>The Committee received the paper 015.EC.23-24_ Use of ear plugs in examinations. It was presented by Andrew Higgins, Director of Student Administrative Services and the key discussions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The document submitted reported a number of arguments for and against mainly gathered by comparing Russell Group Universities. - Commented that ear plugs are allowed in case of reasonable adjustment. Questioned how many ear plugs were approved in the past academic year and whether is an actual problem. - Holly Roffe, Representative of Student Union, commented that some people would not be aware of any medical diagnosis that may require ear plugs to support their academic performance. However, they would still benefit from having them available in the exam room. - Noted that additional aspects should be considered when suggesting providing ear plugs such as costs, logistics (i.e. who is responsible for placing out or collecting them), sustainability. <p>Decision: The Committee was not able to reach any solid decision around ear plugs in examinations and recommended more work to clarify several aspects such as logistics, cost, sustainability.</p>
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Other

016.EC.23-24	<p>Any other business</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>
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Items below this line are for receipt and/or approval, without discussion

017.EC.23-24	<p>23-24 Invigilation handbook- Updated Version</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the 23-24 Invigilation handbook- Updated Version (017.EC.23-24)</p>
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018.EC.23-24	<p>Operational changes to exams implemented in 2022-23</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the Operational changes to exams implemented in 2022-23 (018.EC.23-24)</p>
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Next meeting: Next meeting: Tuesday 23rd January 10:00-11:30

DECISIONS AND ACTIONS			
ITEM	DECISION/ACTION	LEAD AND DUE DATE	STATUS
[2022-2023]			
007	Exams Manager to request details of the modules moving from Summer 2024 to January 2024, together with estimated numbers of students registered. WBS to also provide data on which modules are available to non WBS students.	Jo Latimer	Canceled. No formal request submitted by WBS so far. Action on hold and can be removed from the live log.

008	Deadline for Summer papers to be communicated to departments. Examinations office to undertake business analysis to look at current processes for the validation and quality checking of examination papers and to look at the overall processes of dealing with edits on the papers. To investigate if there is a simpler way dealing of with errors prior to printing I.e. could the exams team edit papers directly to amend simple corrections to titles and formatting etc. To investigate potential improvements with the process of printing.	Jo Latimer	Completed. It was confirmed that a renewed checking process was implemented in 22-23 to minimise printing errors. No further concerns were reported around this item.
009	Action (1) Exams Manager to liaise with the Doctoral College and PG SU Officer to obtain their view on the decision, before inviting PGR and PDA students to join a pool of support invigilators for 22/23.	Jo Latimer	Superseded. A verbal update around the budget for invigilator would be provided when discussing the item 014.EC.23-24 later in the agenda. This action for 22-23 is now superseded.
	Action (2) AH to explore obtaining a central budget with which to pay the pool of invigilators.	Andrew Higgins	
010	Exams manager to communicate process for dealing with such requests to all departments (Proposed process for departmental challenges to timetabling decisions)	Jo Latimer	Completed.
[2023-2024]			
009.EC.23-24	Decision: The Committee confirmed the current list of Scheduling Constraints for the academic year 23/24 and reiterated the procedure that any change to the approved list should be discussed with MMA Team and approved by the Chair of the Examinations Committee.		
010.EC.23-24	Decision: The Committee agreed to investigate the issue related to an early publication of exams dates and a tailored meeting will be arranged with the following members AC, AH, JL, HR.		
	Action: AC to investigate further the issue related to an early publication of exams dates. A meeting will be arranged with the following attendees AC, AH, JL, HR.	Andy Clark, Jan 24	NEW ACTION
011.EC.23-24	Decision: : The committee felt the paper needed more consultation with departments and requested a concrete proposal about what specific calculators would be recommended to be provided at a later date' (011.EC.23-24)		
012.EC.23-24	Decision: The committee agreed to reduce the completion period for controlled condition timed examinations with Student Chosen Fixed Start and End Times Within a 21-Hour Period.		
014.EC.23-24	Action: AH to investigate the feasibility to get additional financial resources for invigilation to cover other 23/24 exam periods.	Andrew Higgins, Jan 24	NEW ACTION
015.EC.23-24	Decision: The Committee was not able to reach any solid decision around ear plugs in examinations and recommended more work to clarify several aspects such as logistics, cost, sustainability		