The CEC is asked to:

i) **discuss** the proposal

ii) **note** the proposal

1. **Background**

1.1 This project emerged from the discussions that took place during the Officer Team Meeting in November 2016. The group discussion identified a need to review the existing structure of the forums, service efficiency, students experience as well as the set of rules and regulations known as ‘Comprehensive Guide to the OUSA Forum Service’

1.2 This paper introduces the approach to the forums’ restructure and plans for the review of the policies and procedures overseen by the Controller Advisory Panel (CAP)

2.1 **Proposal**

2.2 There are a number of points that need to be considered during this review:

   a) Basic rules for the forums – which are currently in place and reflect simple 'netiquette' and manners in accordance with general Association views on respect for others. Students accessing forums are required to follow ‘Spirits of OUSA Forums’ which were designed to protect students who are participating in the forums and offer them safe environment.

   b) OUSA Controller and CAP – roles and responsibilities of these two monitoring bodies need to be defined, including review of the Disciplinary Procedures that will be conducted at a later stage as part of a wider review of the Association’s disciplinary policies and procedures.

   c) Moderators (including Mentor Moderators) – duties, responsibilities, requirements and code of conduct - what is expected of them and how they should be supported in their roles as moderators. Within their roles there is
also a need to manage their expectations on the level of support offered to
them by the Controller function, CAP and Mentor Moderators.

d) Training of the Moderators – the existing training structure needs to be considered during this review with a possibility of a substantial change where there will be less emphasis on the disciplinary element which has more or less atrophied in the recent years and more emphasis on the induction process and support role. Also more of the Moderators involvement in needed with the policy aspects that are currently held inside CAP. This will help in the event where the CAP members have very little or no moderating experience and the mentors' experience could be useful.

Previously this has been done an ad hoc basis, however - 'Prevent' and the 'Guidelines for distressed students' may need to be formalised and form an integral part of the new training structure. New and experienced Moderators will be invited to participate in this part of the review.

e) Forum Membership – Although forums are publically open (excluding business forums) to anyone who has access to the University's computing system, the Association might need to consider a system where memberships of specific forums can be monitored. This is currently subjected to future discussions with Learning and Teaching Solutions (LTS) about the current service provision and future options for change.

3. Timescales

3.1 Up to 2 weeks for each subject may be needed - basic rules may require less - and a period of time for feedback from the wider moderator community and a redraft in response. This should allow enough time for the list of recommendations to be drafted and presented to the April CEC.

3.2 Following from the recommendations made by the CAP members and with their involvement; VP Communications, OUSA Controller and Head of Operations will lead the process of reviewing the existing structure of the forums. This is subjected to the initial discussion with LTS about the limitations, flexibility, layout and formal procedures associated with the operational aspects of the forums (Target date: April CEC)

3.3 It is expected that July CEC will receive a list of structural recommendations from the working group and the project will move to the implantation phase.

3.4 It is expected that the majority of the forums will be restructured by October 2017.

Peter Cowan Magda Hadrys
VP Administration Head of Operations