



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE
Registrary's Office

Dr James Knapton
Information Compliance Officer

Adam Sharpe
By email

Reference: FOI-2017-362

6 September 2017

Dear Mr Sharpe,

Your request was received on 8 August 2017 and I am dealing with it under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act').

You asked:

I request the minutes of the meetings for the Admissions Forum and Undergraduate Admissions Committee (UAC), for the period starting 1 September 2015 and ending 14 May 2017.

The Minutes of the UAC are published at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/committee/uac/minutes/>; the Minutes of the Admissions Forum from the period are attached. Please note that the attached document should not be copied, reproduced or used except in accordance with the law of copyright.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request an internal review of this decision, you should write to Dr Kirsty Allen, Head of the Registrary's Office, quoting the reference above, at The Old Schools, Trinity Lane, Cambridge, CB2 1TN or send an email marked for her attention to foi@admin.cam.ac.uk. The University would normally expect to receive your request for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this letter and reserves the right not to review a decision where there has been undue delay in raising a complaint. If you are not content with the outcome of your review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner may be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (<https://ico.org.uk/>).

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UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE
Registry's Office

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Knapton', written in a cursive style.

James Knapton

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 16 October 2015** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr M Sewell (Director of Admissions), Dr P Wingfield (CAI), Dr A Spencer (CHR), Dr S Boss (CHU), Dr J Padley (CHU), Dr J Goodman (CL), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr M Griffin (CTH), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Gemelos (ED), Dr R Henderson (EM), Dr C Russell (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr S Davis (G), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr M Franklin (HH), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr B Post (JE), Dr H Watson (JN), Dr F Hernandez (K), Dr E Tomlinson (LC), Dr J Munns (M), Dr S Mentchen (M), Dr H Bateman (MUR), Dr S Lucy (N), Mr S Mandelbrote (PET), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr J Keeler (SE), Dr K Dickers (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr I McNeill (TH), with Dr P Fara (Senior Tutors' Committee), Miss H Blair (CUSU), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Mr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group), Mr J Beard (CAO), Mr T Levinson (CAO), Miss R Lister (CAO), Mrs E Page (Administrative Secretary, CAO), and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

In attendance: Miss L McGarty (PEM), Dr N Cuncliffe (for item 6) and Dr W Peterson (for item 7).

15/100 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr M Wormald (PEM), Dr W Galloway (PEM), Miss V Mills (Admissions Secretaries and Officers Representative), Dr A Murray (TH), Dr L MacVinish (W) and Dr M Hrebeniak (W).

15/101 Extraordinary Items of Business**i) CamSIS Issues**

Mr Beard reported on ongoing technical problems with CamSIS, including problems with uploading transcripts and photos, as well as logging in to the Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA) and Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ). It was unclear exactly how many applicants had been affected by the problems but it was **agreed** that the Admissions and Data Services team would circulate a list of applicants who registered for their COPA but who had not submitted by the 15 October deadline.

The Director of Admissions stressed that deadlines must still be strictly adhered to unless it was clear that an application had been affected by the technical issues within CamSIS.

Mr Beard reported that there are serious concerns over the impact the issues have caused, particularly in the additional workload for the Admissions and Data Services team at such a peak period. Senior University staff had been alerted to the significant difficulties that had been created, both for applicants as well as staff. It was noted that CamSIS is investigating the problems and it is hoped that the SAQ will not be significantly affected. The Admissions and Data Services team were thanked sincerely for all of their hard work in dealing with these issues.

ii) Numbers Update

The Director of Admissions provided an update on application numbers which are up, slightly, on the same point last year.

15/102 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 August were approved as an accurate record (AF 15/05/1) with a small emendation to minute 15/86.

15/103 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved with the exception of item 24(iii), minutes of the Admissions Research Working Group held on 13 August 2015.

15/104 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

15/105 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA*i) Affiliated Entry for Joint Triposes (15/88)*

Dr Fara reported that at the last meeting of the committee overseeing the proposals for new Joint Triposes affiliated entry was specifically raised by her and the Director of Admissions. Affiliated entry will not be permitted in the first instance, but this does not preclude a change of policy once the new courses have become established. This reassurance was welcomed.

Dr Fara reported that not all the MML languages would be included in the first offering of the History and Modern Languages Tripos but these options will be considered after the first year of the course's introduction.

i) Deputy Chair of Admissions Forum (15/98)

The Chair reported Dr Spencer had been appointed as Deputy Chair of the Admissions Forum upon which he was congratulated.

15/106 ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS FOR BIOLOGISTS AND CHANGES TO THE MATHEMATICAL BIOLOGY COURSE

A paper was received for consideration (AF 15/06/2). Dr Cuniffe presented the updated information on the proposal, which was intended to address concerns raised at both the Admissions Forum and the Senior Tutors' Committee.

It was noted that the main component of the updated proposal would be to provide some additional formal teaching for students without A Level Mathematics (or equivalent). The proposed mechanism is that starting from October 2017 Mathematical Biology should be altered to consist of two streams, for example Mathematical Biology A (MB-A) and Mathematical Biology B (MB-B). It is anticipated that MB-B will be the default choice, and will be accessible to any students with a background equivalent to A Level Mathematics. MB-A will be for those students who would have previously undertaken Elementary Mathematics for Biologists (EMB).

It was noted that the two streams would be identical for the first half of Michaelmas term, after which lectures for the two courses would be separate with MB-A students studying Introduction to Calculus and MB-B students studying Advanced Statistics. The two streams would merge again at the start of Lent term, and share all lectures thereafter. The aim would be to have a cohort of students with a similar profile of mathematical ability by the end of the first year of the Tripos.

The expectation for important additional preparatory study before such students arrive in Cambridge was stressed. There was unanimous support for the proposal that the extra single supervision for the first four weeks of Michaelmas term should be frontloaded into the first two weeks, when students have fewer lectures and supervisions.

The suggested wording for the prospectus was discussed and it was **agreed** that it would need to be shortened for the purposes of the printed version. It was **agreed** that Miss Lister, Dr Keeler and Dr Cuniffe should develop appropriate wording for the printed prospectus and the Study Cam website.

For its part the Admissions Forum was satisfied with the revised proposal and **agreed** to commend this to the Senior Tutors' Committee, subject to satisfactory clarification of the

wording to be used in the prospectus and online. It was noted that this proposal would also need approval from the General Board for Education.

15/107 ECONOMICS OFFER LEVEL

A paper was received for consideration (AF 15/06/3). Dr Peterson was welcomed to the meeting and reported on the proposal to increase the Economics typical offer level from A*AA to A*A*A. Dr Peterson reported that the A*AA standard offer does not normally accurately reflect the offers set by Colleges because of the requirement for A Level Mathematics and the fact that many applicants also present with Further Mathematics. Directors of Studies have found that applicants without an A* grade in Mathematics struggle with the more technical components of the course and, as a result, most offers of A*AA would need to stipulate A* specifically in Mathematics. It was noted that many successful applicants take A Level Further Mathematics which more closely resembles the academic profile of a science applicant to Cambridge, rather than an arts/social science applicant. Dr Peterson reported that the research by the Admissions Research Working Party indicates that the number of Economics applicants gaining a minimum of two A* grades substantially exceeds the target number of places available and therefore an increase in offer level should not significantly affect the number applying. It was noted that the average A Level attainment of Economics applicants is similar to those in Medicine and Natural Sciences.

It was **agreed** that it is important to be transparent about offer levels. At present we effectively encourage applications from post-qualification students with a single A* who realistically have little or no chance of an offer. Concern was expressed at the possibility that for those who had taken A Level Maths in Year 12 the change risked turning a two A* offer into what is in reality a three A* offer. It was **agreed** that it is very important to ensure there is no negative impact on widening participation or Office for Fair Access (OFFA) targets. It was stressed that Colleges may wish to reserve the right not to stipulate A* in A Level Mathematics in offers for Economics, and a question over whether Colleges could include an A* in A Level Mathematics taken early in offers was raised. It was **agreed** that Colleges would need to be mindful of the context of an applicant in relation to widening participation although it was noted that it would remain possible to relieve an applicant from a widening participation background who missed an A*A*A offer. The effective cover ratio if Colleges retained the A*AA offer would become so close to zero as to deny such applicants the chance of showing their suitability in examinations.

After careful consideration it was **agreed** that transparency in relation to offer levels is very important and the proposal to increase the Economics offer level to A*A*A was **approved**.

15/108 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ADMISSIONS FORUM

The Terms of Reference for the Admissions Forum were received for information (AF 15/06/4).

15/109 APPLICATIONS, OFFERS AND ACCEPTANCES FOR 2015 ENTRY VS FOUR YEAR TREND

Data on applications, offers and acceptances for 2015 entry vs a four year trend was received for information (AF 15/06/5). The Director of Admissions reported that serious consideration would need to take place regarding continuing efforts to move towards the agreed OFFA targets. The new Low Participation Neighborhood (LPN) measure of POLAR 3 Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 had not been met and it was stressed that Colleges need to look carefully at contextual data and how they recruit in order to address this. Given the maintained sector school position is at the lower end of the new range, it was also stressed that there is no room at all for complacency within Colleges and care must be taken to ensure the targets agreed with OFFA are collectively met. Dr Tomlinson queried the accuracy of the POLAR 3 percentage calculations and it was agreed that she should liaise directly with Miss Reed on this.

15/110 ACCESS AGREEMENT 2016 ONWARDS

Notes from an OFFA Targets and Outreach Strategy Meeting as well as a discussion paper (Developing New Targets) were received for consideration (AF 15/06/6a,b). Mr Beard reported on the options for consideration.

It was noted that HESA is preparing new Performance Indicators (PIs) in relation to Widening Participation, namely Free School Meals (FSM), household income, school type and applications from schools with low applications. Mr Beard suggested that, even if the collegiate University did not adopt targets in these specific areas, it should develop research on an evidence-based response to enquiries about them.

Mr Beard reported that he had received correspondence suggesting that one of the proposed options (admissions arising from specific outreach interventions) might be difficult to make progress against, particularly if the interventions were delivered by multiple Colleges with different context and objectives. It was noted that Government has a specific interest in progress on Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) admissions, and so this might also be an area for consideration. A discussion regarding various options took place and suggestions included developing targets in relation to pre-16 work and Care Leavers.

It was **agreed** that, for its part, the Admissions Forum should support the four principles outlined in item 4 of the OFFA Targets and Outreach Strategy paper (AF 15/06/6a) as well as the principles outlined in section 28 of the Developing New Targets paper (AF 15/06/6b).

It was noted that firm proposals would be received at the next meeting of the Admissions Forum. A Working Group will be established to develop these proposals and membership of this group will comprise Mr Beard, the Director of Admissions, plus two additional Admissions Tutors. Volunteers were asked to contact the Chair or Miss Reed in the first instance. Colleges were reminded that their input is vital to ensure all parties are in agreement with the outcome of the discussions on new targets.

15/111 SENIOR TUTORS' ADMISSIONS WORKING GROUP ON QUALIFICATION REFORM

The Chair reported that Faculty and Departmental meetings are underway and members of the Working Group have been in attendance to address queries that are raised. It is felt that engagement has been productive and whilst not all of the feedback is in agreement to the proposals, careful consideration is being given to all views.

It was **agreed** to request from the Working Group a written summary of the outcomes of these meetings in time for the next meeting of the Admissions Forum as it will be important to help inform further discussions.

15/112 OVERSEAS INTERVIEWS – ROLES AND APPOINTMENTS

A paper on roles and appointments in relation to overseas interviews was received for consideration (AF15/06/7). The Director of Admissions reported that the Undergraduate Admissions Committee (UAC) had considered the principles outlined in the paper and it had agreed that the matter should also be referred to the International Admissions and Recruitment Working Group (IARWG). The previously agreed principle that all overseas interviewers are selected and approved by the Admissions Forum and Senior Tutors' Committee respectively each year was reiterated. It was stressed that if the Team Leaders of the overseas interview teams are to be paid then a final decision needs to be taken swiftly and the sources of funding to cover this additional cost need to be identified. It was noted that the role of overseas interview Team Leaders differs between territories and therefore this would need to be appropriately accounted for within any remuneration arrangement.

The role descriptions of the overseas interviewers and Team Leaders were broadly **approved**. It was generally **agreed** that overseas interviewers as well as Team Leaders should be remunerated (at an appropriate level and according to the workload involved). It was wholeheartedly **agreed** that if Team Leaders and interviewers are remunerated then it

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should be made very clear that this is not a permanent appointment and that the positions should be advertised regularly with appropriate fixed term limits.

It was noted that this matter would be brought back to the Admissions Forum for further discussion following consideration by the IARWG.

The Director of Admissions reported that the three year pilot of interviewing in Australia would come to an end in December 2015 and it would be helpful to get feedback from Colleges as to whether the numbers justify the operation of this particular scheme. Colleges were asked to send any feedback to the Director of Admissions before 2 November, in time for the next meeting of IARWG.

15/113 SUPPLEMENTARY APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE (SAQ) AND CAMBRIDGE ONLINE PRELIMINARY APPLICATION (COPA) REVIEW

Proposals on changes to the SAQ and COPA for those applying in 2016 onwards were received for consideration (AF 15/06/8). The Director of Admissions reported that the Working Group had been established both to look at admissions processes in light of the forthcoming qualification reforms and to take action on the Admissions Forum's previous decision that it is important to shorten the SAQ and COPA in order to streamline the process for applicants.

The proposals were discussed. Concern was expressed on behalf of the mature Colleges over the proposed removal of the deferred entry question as some of them found this information helpful during the Winter Pool. It was stressed, however, that, as is the case currently, there is nothing to prevent Colleges from making deferred entry offers if a direct-entry offer is not on the table. There was widespread support for the view that this question is often answered in ways counter to its original intention by applicants who feel that they may otherwise be disadvantaged in the admissions process if they do not answer in a particular way. It routinely generates questions to the SAQ help email address from bemused students. The answer could not be treated as a reliable indicator of any given applicant's intentions as it is so frequently gamed.

It was felt that the removal of the question regarding any difficulties with teaching should be reconsidered as applicants often provide information in this question that has not previously been supplied by the school. It was noted that this information can often be very helpful, particularly in relation to deselection decisions and it was therefore **agreed** that this question should be retained.

With the exception of the question regarding difficulties with teaching, the proposals in relation to the removal of questions on the SAQ and COPA were **approved** and it was **agreed** that Miss Reed should take this work forward with CamSIS.

15/114 SUBJECT MODERATION SPREADSHEET WORKING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held on 21 September were received for consideration (AF 15/06/9). Dr Fara reported that the proposals outlined within the minutes were in preparation for October 2016, when applicants would be applying for the first time with predominantly linear A Levels. All recommendations from the Working Group and detailed in the minutes were **approved**.

Dr Fara reported that provisional plans were being developed to prepare in the event of admissions tests being introduced.

15/115 MEDIA COVERAGE

A report was received for information (AF 15/06/10). Dr Almeroth-Williams explained that a large proportion of his work is spent dealing with hostile enquiries about admissions and he noted that there are now, more than ever, journalists who are designated as education correspondents but who have relatively little engagement or understanding of our processes. Their priority is to find controversial stories so as to achieve publication. Colleagues were asked to remain highly aware of this when speaking to the press.

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It was noted that recently some unfortunate statements had been made to the press and the Office of Communications had been forced to defend the University, whereas if it had already been involved, these statements may not have been made in the manner they were. Colleges were reminded that the University is particularly vulnerable in the light of ongoing discussions in relation to admissions tests. The Office of Communications is available to help with media enquiries and to ensure misquotes are avoided wherever possible.

Colleges were asked to send any "good news" stories to Dr Almeroth-Williams as these are always very useful. It was noted that communicating with the media through the Office of Communications is always good practice as Dr Almeroth-Williams can often help to give wider context and prevent undesirable headlines.

Colleges were asked to be mindful when promoting their own events as they are also representing the collegiate university; it is crucial not to be seen to be inadvertently criticising other Colleges. The importance for Colleges to work together for the collective good was stressed.

15/116 ADMISSIONS SELECTION TRAINING

The Chair reported that the training website is now live and bookings can be made at <http://www.training.cam.ac.uk/cppd/theme>.

Thanks were expressed to volunteer Colleges for hosting rooms and providing interviewees, and Mrs Page for her help with the administration.

15/117 TRIPOS UPDATES

i) Education Tripos

A paper regarding changes to the Education Tripos was received for information (AF 15/06/11). The Chair reported that further information on the changes due for implementation for entry in 2017 was due to be circulated shortly. Colleges were asked to contact the Director of Admissions and Miss Reed if they receive applications in this cycle for deferred entry in any of the strands that are being discontinued in order to ensure that the appropriate UCAS procedures are followed.

ii) Archaeology Tripos

Dr Lucy reported that the proposal to introduce an Archaeology Tripos for 2017 entry has been making its way through the relevant committees and will shortly be graded. Further details are available in the Reporter: <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2015-16/weekly/6399/section4.shtml#heading2-7>.

iii) Joint Triposes

The Director of Admissions reported on the new joint Triposes in History and Politics, and History and Modern Languages. It was noted that not all of the modern and medieval languages will be offered in the first year but are expected to be brought into the Tripos from 2018 onwards.

15/118 2016 POSTING DATE FOR ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

A table providing details of the key dates for communicating 2016 admissions decisions was received for information (AF 15/06/12).

15/119 CAMBRIDGE BURSARY SCHEME SUB GROUP REPRESENTATIVE

The Chair nominated Dr Spencer as Admissions Forum representative for the Cambridge Bursary Scheme Sub Group and this was **approved**.

15/120 CORE MATHEMATICS

A joint letter regarding the Core Mathematics qualifications from Nick Gibb and Jo Johnson along with a briefing paper for universities was received for information (AF 15/06/13a,b). The Chair reported that it had already been established that this qualification would not be acceptable as a replacement where A Level Mathematics is a requirement. It was reported that some teachers have already expressed concerns in relation to the additional workload

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involved in delivering this new qualification. It was **agreed** that schools should be strongly encouraged not to forsake the teaching of A Level Mathematics or Further Mathematics in favour of Core Mathematics, especially in light of funding limitations.

It was **agreed** that the general principle is that we would prefer schools and colleges to spend their limited resources on the teaching of A Level Mathematics and Further Mathematics. The Core Mathematics qualification would not form a part of our entry requirements.

15/121 I-WANT-TO-STUDY-ENGINEERING.ORG AND ISAAC PHYSICS

Suggested wording for communicating with Engineering and Physical Natural Sciences applicants was received (AF 15/06/14a,b). The Chair reported that i-want-to-study-engineering information was first introduced to applicants last year and should be done again.

It was noted that the Isaac Physics resource was also very helpful but the proposed wording would require some adjustments to ensure clarity. It was **agreed** that the amended wording should be circulated to Colleges as soon as possible.

It was stressed that highlighting such resources does not indicate endorsement of a particular initiative, but rather draws attention to a resource that applicants may find useful.

15/122 CIE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

A proposed statement to be used in response to specific requests for qualification endorsements was received for consideration (AF 15/06/15). The Chair reported that having previously agreed a position on the CIE A Level Global Perspectives subject, Colleges were now being asked to specifically endorse this on the CIE website. The proposed statement was **approved** and it was **agreed** that this should be used for future specific requests for endorsement.

15/123 SUBJECT CONVENORS AND PRE POOL MODERATION MEETINGS

A list of the 2015/16 Subject Convenors and pre-pool moderation meeting arrangements was received for information (AF 15/06/16).

15/124 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Admissions Research Steering Group held on 6 July 2015* (AF 15/06/17)
- ii) *Cambridge Bursary Scheme Sub Group held on 16 July 2015* (AF 15/06/18)
- iii) *Admissions Research Working Group held on 13 August 2015* (AF 15/06/19)

Professor Poole noted that the circulation of Mr Castillo's research had not been received by the Admissions Forum and it was **agreed** that Miss Reed would circulate this as soon as possible after the meeting.

- iv) *Mature Strategy Group held on 23 September 2015* (AF 15/06/20)
- v) *CamSIS Special Interest Group held on 24 September 2015* (AF 15/06/21)

The Chair reported that Professor Goodman would be replacing Dr Keeler as the Chair of the CamSIS Special Interest Group. Dr Keeler was thanked sincerely for all the work he had done as Chair of this group.

15/125 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- i) *Operation of the Poolside Meeting Protocol for Physical Natural Sciences (NSP)*
Dr Sutherland reported on the concerns from the Physical Natural Sciences Director of Studies over the impending changes to the poolside meeting protocol, which had previously been agreed by Admissions Forum.

A revised proposal for the operation of the NSP poolside meeting was tabled and Dr Sutherland summarized how the meeting would work and it was noted that Directors of Studies felt that this revised protocol would offer the best chance for a student to receive an offer whilst still protecting those Colleges that see merit in re-interviewing.

A straw poll took place where three Colleges voted in favour of the revised proposal and all other voting Colleges present voted against. The decision that NSP should try out the standard large subject pool protocol for this round was reaffirmed. The Forum could return to assess how the protocol had worked in the annual review of the round.

15/126 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 20 November 2015 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2015/16 have been agreed as:

Friday 22 Jan 2016

Friday 19 Feb 2016

Friday 22 April 2016

Friday 3 June 2016

Wednesday 17 August 2016

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

HR/EP/CAO/30.10.2015

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 20 November 2015** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, CHR), Dr M Sewell (Director of Admissions), Dr P Wingfield (CAI), Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr J Padley (CHU), Professor J Goodman (CL), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr M Griffin (CTH), Dr D Bainbridge (CTH), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Correia (DOW), Dr M Gemelos (ED), Dr C Russell (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Davis (G), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr M Franklin (HH), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr F Hernandez (K), Dr E Tomlinson (LC), Dr J Munns (M), Dr S Mentchen (M), Dr S Martin (M), Dr H Bateman (MUR), Dr S Lucy (N), Dr M Wormald (PEM), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr K Dickers (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr A Murray (TH), Dr M Hrebeniak (W), Dr L MacVinish (W), with Dr P Fara (Senior Tutors' Committee), Miss H Blair (CUSU), Miss V Mills (Admissions Secretaries and Officers' Representative), Mr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group Representative), Mr J Beard (CAO), Miss R Lister (CAO), Mrs E Page (Administrative Secretary, CAO), and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

In attendance: Mr A Jefferies (for items 6-9).

15/127 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr T Levinson (CAO), Dr S Boss (CHU), Dr H Watson (JN), Dr A Zsák (PET), Dr S Jackson (PET), Dr J Keeler (SE), and Dr I McNeill (TH).

15/128 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 October were approved as an accurate record (AF 15/07/1).

15/129 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved.

15/130 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

15/131 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

i) Subjects Required for the New Joint Tripos in History and Modern Languages (15/117)

The Director of Admissions reported on the proposed subject requirements for the new Joint Tripos in History and MML. It had been agreed that there would be no requirement for A Level History, which reflects the requirement of the current History Tripos. The options for History and French, or Spanish or German will only be available to students who have studied the relevant language to A Level, or equivalent, which reflects the requirements within the current MML Tripos. There will not be a requirement for an A Level language for those wishing to study Russian *ab initio*. The Director of Admissions advised that if a College wishes to depart from these requirements then it must advise the Student Recruitment and Information team in Cambridge Admissions Office before 27 November to ensure the undergraduate prospectus is fully accurate for 2017 entry.

The Director of Admissions suggested that the University Ordinance: Examination Requirements for Matriculation (Chapter II, Schedule I (pp. 167-169)) requires a statement to cover the requirements of this new Joint Tripos alongside the existing requirement for MML.

Colleges were asked to be mindful that the *ab initio* Russian option essentially means that an applicant can be admitted to an MML related Tripos without any A Level (or equivalent) languages. This is consistent with the Triposes in which language is integral, such as Asian and Middle Eastern Studies or Four Year Classics. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would liaise with those responsible for the drafting of the Ordinances to ensure clarity on this matter.

ii) Overseas Interviewers' Roles and Responsibilities (15/112)

A minute from the International Admissions and Recruitment Working Group (IARWG) was received (AF 15/07/2). The Director of Admissions reported that this matter was discussed at IARWG and has been referred back to the CAO Management Group as there are significant funding implications. The recommendation cannot be acted upon until the CAO Management Group has considered the funding implications further.

15/132 SENIOR TUTORS' ADMISSIONS WORKING GROUP ON QUALIFICATION REFORM

Updates on admissions assessment proposals by subject were received along with a summary document (AF 15/07/3a,b,c). Mr Jefferies reported on the hard work undertaken by Directors of Studies and noted with thanks the cooperative and positive way in which this matter had been addressed by all concerned. It was clear from the feedback that flexibility is needed across subjects but all proposals look viable and a mixed economy seems to be the preferred option. It was **agreed** that it is very important to operate a fair, objective and, wherever possible, consistent approach to assessment across the Colleges.

Dr Lucy reported that public presentation of the new assessment arrangements will be challenging and it is vital that applicants and their advisers can see clearly that Colleges are being fair and objective. The system will be a two-year pilot, and will be fully reviewed before any decision is taken on whether to put testing onto on a more permanent basis. Should the proposed assessment proposals be approved, significant work will need to be undertaken to ensure that supporting materials are ready and publicly available by the end of March. It was noted that where subjects agree to use common elements of the proposed assessments, this work will be easier, as well as it making it more straightforward in terms of articulating different assessment requirements to applicants. Arrangements for at-interview assessment need to be considered further to ensure clarity.

Communication of the proposed assessment must remain confidential/internal until January, ie, after the current round's interviewing season is over. A media campaign will then be used to ensure timely and clear communication of the new requirements. The importance of making the process as easy as possible for schools and colleges to implement was stressed and it was **agreed** that this would be aided by harmonization of the length of pre-interview assessments, irrespective of subject. Again, the use by cognate subjects of common assessment elements will be advantageous.

It was **recommended** that each subject establish a small group to take forward development of the supporting materials in time for March 2016 and to appoint a central contact for each subject to ensure key communications are delivered and disseminated in a timely fashion.

Colleges were made aware that the Sutton Trust is due to publish a report on Oxford and Cambridge admissions which includes erroneous claims about Cambridge's current use of tests, exaggerating the number, for example, by conflating tests with such elements as preparatory reading pre-interview. Such a clear misrepresentation may yet be published despite efforts to correct it and Admissions Tutors should be prepared for such matters to be raised with them.

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As well as clear communications regarding testing, communication regarding deselection is equally important. It was **agreed** that in the first instance tests should only be used for deselection with great caution until experience and research can better inform the process. It was **agreed** that it would be important to plot test scores against A Level performance of all applicants.

Concern was expressed over the possibility of tests having a deterrent effect on certain types of applications, especially, for example, mature students for HSPS, which could be very damaging to certain Colleges. It was **agreed** that systematic monitoring of application numbers will be essential. It was suggested that palliative measures may be required for any Colleges/subjects which find themselves irrevocably compromised by the introduction of the proposed assessment system.

The financial implications of testing were discussed. It was noted that the initial indication from the Admissions Testing Service was £30 per applicant, but this was on the basis that all applicants would be taking a pre-interview test. Bursars had been advised of the indicative costs. It was confirmed that the assessments would be free to UK applicants, irrespective of whether they are taken in a school/college or an administrative centre.

Arrangements for the assessment of overseas interviewees were discussed. Where a pre-interview assessment is used for a particular subject, all overseas interviewees will have to sit the test on the same day as UK applicants. This will not be at the same time as their interview. The arrangements for at-interview assessments would be the same as they are currently. Separate versions of the assessments would be devised for each sitting of such at-interview tests by overseas interviewees (i.e. one per interview location). The overseas interview fee that such interviewees have to pay was noted and may need to be considered again when factoring in costs for testing overseas.

Miss Blair reported that CUSU held significant concerns on any assessment length over 2 hours as it becomes akin to an examination, rather than an assessment. It could also act as a barrier for access where applicants may not have had the opportunity to take AS Levels and have therefore not necessarily sat long examinations before.

The procedure for assessment marking was discussed. It was felt that subject agreed marking criteria with collective distribution of scores for subject moderation purposes is essential. The importance of a quick turnaround in the marking of the assessments was **agreed**. It was noted that there is potential for certain elements of the assessments to be machine marked and for test centres to scan and upload the written elements. It is essential to be clear both internally and externally and ensure a transparent process, particularly with regards to the Winter Pool.

It was felt that there is still a particular difficulty with deselection but distributing pre-interview assessment scores out to all Colleges may ease this and help support deselection decisions. It is important for internal colleagues and schools/colleges to remember that the testing is a trial and will be reviewed to ensure appropriate changes are made where necessary.

Colleges should recognise that, as de-selection will be more limited, accommodation and catering numbers are likely to increase in this new regime where applicants take an at-interview assessment, possibly lengthening their stay in Cambridge. This may have an impact on the availability of College facilities for other purposes in December. Colleges were reminded of the longstanding agreement that applicants staying overnight due to interview requirements must not be charged for accommodation or food, but caution was expressed over a suggestion that extra support might be made available above and beyond this.

Unconfirmed

It was stressed that Cambridge has a proud record of evidence-based decisions and the need to monitor the new regime very carefully during the pilot period was reiterated. It was further stressed that proactive engagement with schools and colleges would be essential in order to demonstrate that Colleges are making the fairest admissions decisions possible given the circumstances.

A vote was taken on the assessment proposals. 23 Colleges voted in favour of the proposals, 0 Colleges voted against and 4 Colleges abstained. It was **agreed** that the proposals from the Working Group for pre- and at-interview assessment would be commended to the Senior Tutors' Committee for approval.

15/133 DISCUSSION ON THE CURRENT ADMISSIONS ROUND

Details of the number of direct and open applications received by College and course, as well as information on overall figures by subject, school type and POLAR3 compared to last year were received for information (AF 15/07/4). The Director of Admissions highlighted the data on applications by school type and home applications by POLAR 3 quintile. He emphasised the challenges faced by Colleges in meeting the agreed OFFA targets, particularly in relation to POLAR3 Quintiles 1 and 2.

The Director of Admissions reported, to some agreement, that there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the quality of UMS in some applicants' third subjects is starting to suffer, possibly as a result of funding limitations within maintained sector schools and colleges. It was noted that a pattern of applicants achieving high scores in two subjects but lower in the third could impact on quintile placement and Colleges were asked to be mindful of this. This information should be borne in mind when applicants in the maintained sector are in this position as it could be in relation to a lack of resourcing and funding cuts at the applicant's school. It was **agreed** that care must be taken not to disadvantage such applicants.

It was confirmed that there is no specific compulsory pooling criterion for mature overseas applicant interview scores (it is the same for all applicants: all applicants interviewed overseas (except those for Medicine) who scored 8 or above when interviewed by a Cambridge team overseas **MUST** be pooled (where two interviews are held then 8 must be scored in both interviews)).

It was clarified that the compulsory pooling criteria for post-qualification applicants are based solely on their final results and not on their earlier (AS) results. Such post-A Level applicants who meet the criteria must therefore be interviewed and should not be pooled without interview.

15/134 OVERSEAS MEDICAL ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

A paper regarding the overseas medical admission quota allocation procedure was received for consideration (AF 15/07/5). Mr Jefferies reported that the Group Chairs, the Director of Admissions and he had developed the proposals in order to try and ensure equity across all of the Colleges whilst retaining the primacy of fairness to applicants. Concerns have been expressed on the allocation of overseas Medicine places and it is hoped that these proposals will help to alleviate these concerns. It was stressed that there are far more very strong overseas applicants than can be admitted within the quota. By adjusting the procedure, the Medicine Groups will still have choice but there will also be an opportunity to ensure that the very strongest applicants receive offers, regardless of College. It was broadly **agreed** that the proposals look a more equitable way in which to manage the tight overseas quota restrictions. Concern was raised that Group 4 Colleges will still only have two places and it was **agreed** that Mr Jefferies would liaise with Dr McLarty on the needs of the mature Colleges.

It was stressed that large numbers of overseas applicants at any particular College does not factor in the decisions taken about which College receives the overseas

quota places; it is important that any one College does not have a proportionately large number of quota places based simply on its number of applications.

After careful consideration the proposal was **approved**, as a pilot in the first instance, for the current admissions round.

15/135 FUTURE OFFER LEVELS FOR MEDICINE AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

Documentation regarding Medicine and Veterinary Medicine was received for information (AF 15/07/6a,b,c). The Chair reported on the Veterinary Medicine paperwork in support of the decrease in offer level from A*A*A to A*AA. A full and detailed discussion took place on whether or not the offer level should be lowered.

Discussion raised the suggestion that Colleges may be disadvantaging themselves with the current offer level. However, there may be other factors at play and it is not necessarily a simple matter of the higher offer level deterring applicants. It was noted that with the potential opening of another Vet School in the future, the pool of applicants applying to Cambridge is likely to be further reduced and, as Veterinary Medicine is a small subject, a relatively minor reduction in numbers will have a major impact on potential intake. It was suggested that this is a very serious problem and urgent action must be taken with the aim to improve the number and quality of applicants without lowering standards.

The importance of the Vet School working to improve its recruitment strategies rather than relying only on a change in offer level was stressed. It was reported that September Open Days are being introduced and investment is already being made in website development. The view was expressed that, unlike most applicants, those applying for Veterinary Medicine are usually less concerned about which Vet School they study at, so long as they secure a career at the end of their degree. It was recommended that employability statistics and the benefits of a science degree from Cambridge should be specifically highlighted on the website to help promote the benefits of the course.

In his capacity as Subject Convenor for Veterinary Medicine, Dr Bainbridge reported that lowering the offer level would not result in a lowering of standards but rather help to prevent suitable applicants applying elsewhere. He suggested that when the Nottingham University Vet School opened Cambridge application numbers were not impacted, but the increase in offer level did appear to have had a negative impact on application numbers. He further suggested that Cambridge application numbers are dropping whilst at the same time the national average had been increasing, despite the small national fall in the most recent statistics available. It was felt by some that there is a major psychological difference between requiring one or two A* grades.

It was **agreed** that it would be helpful to see correlations between entry requirements and how well students perform in Tripos examinations but this would involve disaggregating Medics and Veterinary Medics which would be difficult (though not impossible).

Concern was expressed about the presentational problems of reducing the offer level for part of the shared MVST Tripos in a way that meant there would be different entry requirements for Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. Concern was expressed that lowering the offer level for Veterinary Medicine but not Medicine could be unfair when students are following essentially the same course at undergraduate level. The impression this gives to the outside world may also appear contradictory. In order to contemplate having different offer levels consideration may need to be given to separating the two Triposes and it was noted that this was not a matter for the Admissions Forum. It was **agreed**, even if the proposal to lower the offer was met with approval, from 2017 onwards Colleges may be concerned about 'risky' applicants,

particularly in the absence of UMS, and may feel compelled to set A*A*A offers in certain cases.

It was **agreed** that it is important not to rush into a decision and that robust statistical evidence would be required to carefully consider the issue further. It was felt that it would be helpful to look at Quintile Z applicants and it was suggested that mapping second MB marks to UMS quintiles may be helpful. It was **agreed** that a Working Group should be established to look at this matter in more detail and should report back to the Admissions Forum in the New Year once this work has been undertaken. Volunteers were asked to contact the Chair or Miss Reed directly and it was noted that there will need to be volunteers from the different constituencies (ie both for and against the proposal to lower the offer in Veterinary Medicine).

The Chair reported on the letter from the Clinical School requesting that the Medicine offer level also be lowered from A*A*A to A*AA. There was no support to lower the offer and it was felt that there was a lack of evidence to suggest there has been a negative impact on widening participation. It was noted that Medicine was quite different to Veterinary Medicine and had a large number of very highly qualified applicants.

No particular concern over the A*A*A offer had been voiced in the recent Quality Assurance visit by the General Medical Council.

The request for the decrease in offer level in Medicine was unanimously **not approved**.

15/136 OFFER MAKING IN MODERN AND MEDIEVAL LANGUAGES

A report from Professor Midgley was received for information (AF 15/07/7). The Director of Admissions reported on the practice of attaching an A* to a specific language. The previously agreed position, that it is unwise to tie an A* to a specific language, and that there was no evidence in our research to suggest that doing so improved the likelihood of success when here, was reiterated. Colleges were asked to try and ensure Directors of Studies are mindful of this agreed position. It was noted that research conducted by CAO does not support the use of A* in this way.

15/137 AUSTRALIA INTERVIEWING SCHEME

Application figures and costs for the Australia interviewing scheme were received for consideration (AF 15/07/8). The Chair reported that the agreed pilot period of interviewing in Australia was coming to an end in this admissions round. Mr Beard gave an overview of the costs and also the original proposal in terms of the projected costs and anticipated increase in application numbers and acceptances. There was some feeling that the overseas interview fee could be increased in order to accommodate the increased costs of the Australia interview scheme since it would cost the applicants considerably more to travel to Cambridge during December.

The cost of running the Australia scheme is approximately £40,000 per year and, so far, there has been no increase in accepted applicants from this country. It was reported that the inclusion of Australia within the overseas interviewing scheme increases costs for other countries and that the cost per acceptance is significantly higher than in other countries. The overall feeling was that the pilot Australia interview scheme had not achieved what it had originally intended.

A straw poll took place where 4 Colleges were in favour of the scheme continuing and 11 Colleges voted against. It was **agreed** that the matter should be referred to the International Admissions Recruitment Working Group and the Senior Tutors' Committee for further consideration.

Confidential

Unconfirmed

The use of video conferencing for interviewing was raised and it was felt that it should now be used more as a common resource, especially since it is routinely used in other parts of the University, including Graduate Admissions. It was **agreed** that using video conferencing should not undermine other interview schemes but there are areas of the world that would benefit from video conferencing as they are currently completely closed off from Cambridge. It was **agreed** that the matter would be referred to the Annual Review of the Round.

15/138 OFFA TARGETS

Minutes from the OFFA Targets Working Group were received (AF 15/07/9). The Director of Admissions reported on the proposals outlined in item 7 of the minutes. The proposals were **approved** and it was **agreed** that the Admissions Research Steering Group would now be asked to consider a reorganisation of research priorities.

15/139 NAME BLIND APPLICATIONS

Miss Reed reported that she had recently attended the Annual Review Meeting where UCAS had given an update on the Government's name-blind applications proposal. UCAS will be conducting imminently a consultation seeking views from universities and other interested parties. The first stage of the consultation will begin in December and Miss Reed advised that Colleges would be kept fully informed of the consultation.

15/140 FULFILLING OUR POTENTIAL: TEACHING EXCELLENCE, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND STUDENT CHOICE

The Government's Green Paper can be found online at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/474227/BIS-15-623-fulfilling-our-potential-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice.pdf.

Mr Beard reported on the content of the paper, specifically in relation to social mobility and admissions. Concern was raised over whether the Director of Access should have the power to impose targets on institutions that are 'not considered to be performing as well as they should'. Feedback and comments are being collected by Mr Beard in order to respond to the consultation and Colleges were asked to send feedback to Mr Beard directly and as soon as possible. It was noted that the consultation deadline is 15 January so swift progress is required in order for the Senior Tutors' Committee to also consider this matter, which is wider reaching than just admissions. It was noted that the response being coordinated by Mr Beard will focus only on the widening participation and admissions elements of the Green Paper.

15/141 FILE ORDER FOR THE MATHEMATICS WINTER POOL

A request from Dr Gog (Subject Convenor for Mathematics) was received for consideration (AF 15/07/10). The Chair encouraged comments about the proposal and widespread concern was expressed. It was **agreed** that filing applications in this way would run the grave risk of facilitating a tendency for colleagues to hone in on particular Colleges and this would not be fair to the gathered field in the Pool. It was felt that a circulation of subject moderation spreadsheets of just those applicants placed in the Pool (compiled by the Subject Convenor) should be sufficient to address the issues outlined in the proposal.

The proposal for a different file order in the Winter Pool for Mathematics was unanimously **not approved**.

15/142 COMMITTEE VACANCY

The Chair reported that a vacancy had arisen for an Admissions Tutor representative on the Music Awards Working Party. It was **agreed** that any volunteers should contact the Chair or Miss Reed directly.

15/143 POOLSIDE MEETING SCHEDULE

A schedule of Winter Pool meetings was received for information (AF 15/07/11).

15/144 PRE-POOL MEETING SCHEDULE

A final list of Pre-Pool meetings was received for information (AF 15/07/12).

15/145 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 5 October 2015.* (AF 15/07/13)
- ii) *Information and Publication Sub Group held on 7 October 2015.* (AF 15/07/14)
- iii) *CAO Management Group held on 14 October 2015.* (AF 15/07/15)
- iv) *Outreach Steering Group held on 21 October 2015.* (AF 15/07/16)
- v) *Schools Liaison Officers' Group held on 26 October 2015.* (AF 15/07/17)
- vi) *Cambridge Bursary Scheme Sub Group held on 28 October 2015.* (AF 15/07/18)
- vii) *Admissions Directors of Studies in Engineering Meeting held on 28 October 2015.* (AF 15/07/19)
- viii) *International Admissions and Recruitment Working Group held on 2 November 2015.* (AF 15/07/20)
- ix) *Information and Publications Sub Group held on 11 November 2015.* (AF 15/07/21)

15/146 ANY OTHER BUSINESSi) *Interviewing Alone/Safeguarding*

Dr Wormald reported on concerns over advice arising from a recent NSPCC meeting for designated leads on safeguarding and child protection and it was **agreed** that the matter would be referred to the Annual Review of the Round for full consideration.

It was noted that the NSPCC guidance seems, in some cases, to be at odds with College handbooks and includes the recommendation that staff should not be working unsupervised with any minor. This had raised concerns within Pembroke specifically in relation to admissions interviews.

It was generally felt that this advice should be applied in cases of *sustained* contact (which would therefore not apply to admissions interviews), although the NSPCC had advised that institutional practice should be in line with their own issued guidance. Dr Wormald reported that the NSPCC had thought it advisable to have observers in those interviews where there are single interviewers in order to protect both the child and the interviewer. It was noted that Pembroke will offer this option to their interviewers this year.

There is also guidance that states taking appropriate steps in accordance with the age of the minor is acceptable and it was **agreed** that this guidance, as well as any other useful information, should be collated in order to inform a full discussion through the Annual Review of the Round, which should include consideration of how to appropriately handle overnight stays.

It was **agreed** that the Senior Tutors' Committee would also need to take a view on this issue since it is broader than just admissions.

ii) *Offer Letters*

Confidential

Unconfirmed

Miss Reed reported that every year advice is taken from the Office of Intercollegiate Services (OIS) on the content of the undergraduate offer letters. The offer letter must now also be compliant with Competition Marketing Authority (CMA) standards and Dr Russell, the newly appointed Head of OIS, has advised that this is currently not the case. A meeting will take place on 23 November to discuss several suggested amendments and legal advice is being taken in order to ensure that the letter wording and also the Terms and Conditions are accurate and legally compliant.

It was acknowledged that offer letters need to be made available to Colleges in good time. It was requested that Colleges be informed of which sections are compulsory and which, if any, can be tweaked and this was **agreed**.

It was requested that the offer letter wording makes it clear that the offer is for the course specified and applicants do not have an automatic right to change this, should they wish to do so. Miss Reed **agreed** to feed this in to the discussions with the OIS.

iii) Departure of the Director of Admissions

The Chair reported that the Dr Sewell would leave his role as Director of Admissions in January 2016 to take up his role as Senior Tutor at Selwyn. Dr Sewell was thanked most sincerely for all of his hard work and contributions to undergraduate admissions during his term of office.

15/147 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 22 Jan 2016 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2015/16 have been agreed as:

Friday 19 Feb 2016

Friday 22 April 2016

Friday 3 June 2016

Wednesday 17 August 2016

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

HR/EP/CAO/23.11.2015

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 22 January 2016** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, CHR), Dr P Wingfield (CAI), Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr J Padley (CHU), Professor J Goodman (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr D Bainbridge (CTH), Dr M Griffin (CTH), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Gemelos (ED), Dr P Howell (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr M Franklin (HH), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr E Tomlinson (LC), Dr J Munns (M), Dr S Martin (M), Dr H Bateman (MUR), Dr M Wormald (PEM), Mr S Mandelbrote (PET), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr S Connell (SE), Dr S Eves (SE), Dr A Hameed (SE), Dr K Dickens (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr I McNeill (TH), Dr A Murray (TH), Dr L MacVinish (W), Dr M Hrebeniak (W), with Dr M Frasca-Spada (Senior Tutors' Committee), Miss H Blair (CUSU), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Mr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group), Mr T Levinson (CAO), Miss R Lister (CAO), Ms E Page (Administrative Secretary, CAO), and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

In attendance: Professor J Robb, Division of Archaeology (for item 6).

16/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr S Boss (CHU), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr S Davis (G), Dr H Watson (JN), Miss V Mills (Admissions Secretaries and Officers' Group), and Mr J Beard (CAO).

The Chair welcomed Dr Lucy in her new capacity as Director of Admissions, Dr M Frasca-Spada representing the Senior Tutors' Committee for Lent term, and Dr S Connell, Dr S Eves, and Dr A Hameed as new Admissions Tutors for Selwyn College.

16/02 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 November were approved as an accurate record (AF 16/01/1) subject to a small amendment to minute 15/132.

16/03 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved.

16/04 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

16/05 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA*i) CamSIS Issues (15/101)*

Miss Reed reported on a draft incident report from University Information Services (UIS) regarding the CamSIS issues that occurred during Michaelmas term. It was noted that the report will be received at the CamSIS Special Interest Group (SIG) next week and will also come to the next meeting of the Admissions Forum. Miss Reed reported that a patch is now in place which has fixed the file upload problem. The investigation is ongoing and Miss Reed will report any updates to the Admissions Forum.

ii) Veterinary Medicine Working Group (15/135)

The Chair reported that volunteers were still required for the Veterinary Medicine Admissions Working Group. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would Chair and convene the Group with Dr Bainbridge, Dr MacVinish, Dr Tomlinson, Dr Williams, and Dr Eves as members. Professor Alun Williams should also be asked to join the group. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would circulate dates for the first meeting to members.

16/06 THE ARCHAEOLOGY TRIPOS

A guide for Colleges on the new Archaeology Tripos was received for information (AF 16/01/2). Professor Robb, Chair of Teaching Committee in Archaeology, reported that the Division of Archaeology had written to all Colleges to advise them of the new Tripos. The Division has organised many outreach activities to promote the new Tripos and if Colleges require an Archaeologist for any of their outreach events or to act as DoS, then they were invited to contact Professor Robb. So far, many Colleges have committed to admit for Archaeology and it is hoped that all Colleges will do so. It is thought that the Tripos will admit between 20 - 30 students in the first instance and work up to a stable plateau in future years of 40 - 50 admissions, once fully established. Archaeology traditionally has a very collaborative cohort and therefore Colleges should not be overly concerned about admitting singletons as there will be sufficient support in place for them.

It was queried how the admissions numbers for Human, Social, and Political Sciences (HSPS) will be affected by the Archaeology Tripos but it is thought that this is unlikely to be an issue, given the initial small numbers involved. Arrangements are already in place for transfers from HSPS Part I and this is likely to be possible from other Arts subjects into Part II as well. It was noted that there is no clear route in the Tripos regulations to provide for formal transfers and clarity of the process for affiliated students is required. Professor Robb agreed to check this and report back.

Professor Robb confirmed that there would be no set subject requirements at A Level and a broad background of subjects would be acceptable. It was noted that this is important because most students will not have encountered Archaeology at A Level. As with many Arts subjects, an essay subject may be useful, but will not be a requirement. The costs for Colleges in relation to field work was raised and Professor Robb confirmed that there would be no extra costs for Colleges beyond what is already expected of the vacation grant for fieldwork as the Division has funding sources of its own. It was noted that there is no known case of a student being unable to undertake the required fieldwork due to a lack of funding.

16/07 REVIEW OF THE ROUND

The Chair reported that, as usual, a Working Party would be convened to review matters arising from the last admissions round. The following matters had already been identified for review:

a) *Interviewing alone*

It was **agreed** that the issue of responsibility for applicants (ages 16 - 18) staying in College alone and the increase in expense for Colleges who pay interviewers needs to be considered through the Review of the Round.

b) *Presentation of POLAR3 Quintiles on Subject Moderation Spreadsheets*

A request has been made to display all POLAR3 quintiles on the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets and it was **agreed** that this item should be considered through the Review of the Round.

c) *Disclosure of interview questions by current students (Data Protection Form)*

It was felt that it would be helpful to have the Data Protection Form amended to ensure that students are prevented from disclosing interview questions throughout the duration of their study in Cambridge. This follows evidence of current students selling interview questions online.

Confidential

Unconfirmed

d) *Deselection decisions and communication with the overseas interview teams*

It was **agreed** that it would be useful to work out how many applicants were deselected from an overseas interview and subsequently were made an offer after interview in Cambridge. It would be helpful to do this in advance of the Working Party, divided into the different interview locations. The importance of timing of communication between Colleges and the overseas interview teams was emphasised.

It was **agreed** that these matters should be considered through the Review of the Round.

e) *Retention of Subject Moderation Spreadsheet data by Faculties*

It was **agreed** that formal guidelines should be issued to clarify the position for both Faculties and Colleges on the retention of Subject Moderation Spreadsheet data.

It was **agreed** that this item should be considered through the Review of the Round.

f) *The future of the Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA)*

It was **agreed** that this item should be considered through the Review of the Round.

g) *15 October COPA deadline*

The need for a later COPA deadline was raised due to applicants often being unaware of the COPA until they submit their UCAS application. A deadline of 19 October was proposed as this would work well with the SAQ deadline. A straw poll took place where a 19 October deadline was **approved** *nem con*.

It was **agreed** that Miss Reed would check the proposed deadline with the overseas interviewers and Admissions Administrators and would then refer back to the Review of the Round if necessary.

h) *Second College interviews for Classics*

The matter of organisation of second College interviews had again been raised by Admissions Office administrators. It was noted that Classics Directors of Studies had in fact been told by the Faculty that they were responsible for organising these interviews.

It was noted that this matter needed clarification and it was **agreed** that the matter would be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

i) *Consistency of approach where a school takes responsibility for late UCAS submission*

The need for clear guidance and a firm procedure was noted and it was **agreed** that the matter would be referred to the Review of the Round to produce clear guidance.

j) *Transcripts*

The Director of Admissions reported on a productive meeting with a number of schools at which there was a very clear steer that UK schools are strongly against the use of transcripts. Schools had agreed that it was not the additional work that was an issue but more that, in their opinion, the data presented on them is meaningless.

It was stressed that this is not a homogenous group, as applicants studying Access courses will always be required to provide transcripts. Furthermore it was felt that it is unfair to not ask UK applicants for transcripts on the basis of the robustness of the data when there is likely to be little difference in the reliability of transcripts for overseas applicants, which will continue to be a requirement.

There was some feeling that it is not the case that UK transcript data cannot be used intelligently and, with the government expected measures of progress, it would be hard for schools and colleges to justify this position.

It was **agreed** that this item would be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

k) Equal opportunity monitoring and protected characteristic data from UCAS

It was **agreed** that this item would be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

l) Pooling of applicants due to visa difficulties for interview

It was noted that we also need to consider the timing of the availability of pre-interview admissions assessment results and the impact these will have on obtaining visas with even shorter notice.

It was **agreed** that this item would be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

m) Applicants studying the same or similar subjects at other UK universities

It was **agreed** that this item would be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

n) Subject Moderation Arrangements

There is a need to revisit the issue of electronic pre-pool moderation meetings to ensure effective moderation is happening in the way in which it is intended.

It was **agreed** that this item would be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

o) Compulsory Pooling criteria for 2017

As well as reviewing UK qualification compulsory pooling criteria it was suggested that it would also be helpful to look at non-UK qualifications.

It was **agreed** that these matters would be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

p) Completion of a fee status assessment

Some Colleges are not asking for fee status assessments until after an offer is made which can be very problematic at the Winter Pool, especially in relation to the Medicine quota. It was stressed that it is important that applicants are clear on what they are expected to pay in terms of fees, and particularly those planning to study for an equivalent or lower level qualification (ELQ).

It was **agreed** that this item would be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

General Review

It was **agreed** that the process of routinely interviewing via video conferencing should be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

Feedback from applicants on the application process via 'The Student Room' was discussed. Overall, feedback was positive, although issues had been raised with regard to the methods of communication of decisions. Feedback showed that applicants felt that decisions should be communicated to all applicants by email, rather than just those outside the UK, which had been done by some Colleges but not all. If Colleges did not email UK applicants, it was important to send all letters by first class post.

It would also be very helpful to contact applicants if their decisions may be delayed for any reason. There was also some confusion amongst applicants who had been compulsorily pooled, but ultimately been unsuccessful.

It was generally agreed that there is a lack of consistency across Colleges which caused confusion. There was some feeling that there is greater risk of error by using email to communicate decisions and it was **agreed** that it would be important to consult Admissions Administrators on this matter. It was **agreed** that, should all applicants be emailed, full training should be provided to Admissions Administrators.

It was noted that the workload for College Admissions Offices is increasing each year and this needs to be taken into account when asking them to do more. It is important to consider working conditions and make sure that resource levels are fully considered at peak periods. A practical handbook for Administrators would be extremely helpful and it was **agreed** that Miss Reed would take this further with some experienced Admissions Administrators.

It was **agreed** that the method of communicating admissions decisions quickly, consistently and accurately should be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

Concern was raised that some specific overseas schools are advising their students that being interviewed in Cambridge is more advantageous than being interviewed in their home country and it was **agreed** that this needs to be addressed directly. It was **agreed** that the matter would be referred to the Review of the Round to decide on the best way to proceed.

The possibility of supporting travel costs for all Quintile 1 and 2 candidates to attend interview in Cambridge was raised and it was **agreed** that this would also be referred to the Review of the Round for further consideration.

Thanks were expressed to Homerton College for hosting the Winter Pool and it was broadly agreed that the venue had worked well. It was noted, however, that wherever the Pool takes place in future, security still needed further attention.

16/08 UPDATE ON THE 2017 ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENTS

The Director of Admissions reported on the progress that has been made in planning the pre-interview and at-interview assessments, and on their likely duration and format. The at-interview assessments are largely converging on one hour and pre-interview assessments are largely converging on two hours in duration; there would be further clarification in the next two weeks. The recent meeting with schools had been very useful and indicated that other institutions are using Oxford's admissions tests, mainly for Mathematics, the practical implications of which are now being considered by CAO.

Feedback from schools shows that there is strong resistance to IQ type testing and preference is given by teachers to subject specific tests with a defined body of content. Generally, feedback about the assessments is very positive and schools feel that it will help widen participation. Rather than the use of transcripts, schools would much prefer to see UCAS allow them to enter more structured information in references. It was reported that information had been leaked to 'Schools Week', some of which was completely inaccurate and a correction letter has been issued by the Office of Communications.

The final approval for the admissions assessments will take place at the forthcoming Senior Tutors' Committee after which fuller information will be available online, due to be published in March. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions will circulate the final table of arrangements for each subject to the Senior Tutors' Committee in advance of the meeting and this information will be sent to Admissions Tutors as well.

A letter to all UK schools and sixth form colleges will be sent first class on 1 February with a link to additional information online that Colleges can also refer to when answering questions. It was thought that some Q&A type information would be very helpful for different types of internal advisors. A discussion took place on the desirability or otherwise of a formal press release following the letter to schools. The importance of being seen to be proactive and having unambiguous messaging was stressed.

16/09 UCAS CONSULTATION ON NAME BLIND APPLICATIONS

A proposed response to the UCAS consultation on name-blind applications was received for consideration (AF 16/01/3). Miss Reed reported on the draft response and thanked the volunteers (the Director of Admissions, Mr J Beard, Ms M Hughes, Mr S Mandelbrote, Dr J Padley, Dr A Spencer, Dr M Sutherland and Dr E Tomlinson) for their help in drafting it. Any comments or requests for changes to the proposed response should be sent directly to Miss Reed by email by no later than 29 January in order for the response to be finalised and submitted to UCAS by the deadline of 5 February.

16/10 PROPOSED OFFA TARGETS

The Director of Admissions reported that the OFFA Targets Working Party is considering new potential OFFA targets for inclusion in the 2017 Access Agreement. Discussions have focused on an Output Area Classification (OAC) measure, which is already flagged on the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets. Dr Horner, Research Officer at CAO, is conducting further analysis in order for the Working Party to consider further what a sensible target would look like in this regard.

The Director of Admissions further reported that the overlap between applicants with the OAC flag and POLAR3 flag was around one third. The OFFA Targets Working Group felt that this level of overlap was not excessive, and that an OAC target could be a valuable addition to the existing POLAR3 target.

It had been agreed that it is important to have a target that is not so directly connected to admissions and therefore a target based on volume of outreach spend for students at high academic achieving schools, but with low progression to selective institutions is also being considered. The College Outreach Monitoring Group (COMG) is overseeing Collegiate reporting on outreach spend to encourage a more streamlined process and to ensure consistency across the Colleges, as well as identifying potential projects for collective spend.

A target based on household income had been considered but sourcing robust and reliable data has proved problematic. Research will be continued in this area using data available from the Student Loans' Company and the Cambridge Bursary Scheme, but a target in this area is not felt to be appropriate at the present time.

Full details of the OFFA target recommendations are due to be ready for consideration in February and a meeting to discuss these with OFFA is scheduled to take place in March. The new draft of the 2017 Access Agreement must be considered and approved by the relevant committees during March in time for final submission to OFFA by the end of April 2016.

The earlier suggestion to display all POLAR3 quintiles within the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets was raised in the context of the Access Agreement as it was felt that this could lead to the suggestion that quotas are being introduced into the admissions process.

16/11 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEAM UPDATE

A report from Mr Dangerfield, Head of the International Student Team (IST), was received for information (AF 16/01/4). Miss Reed reported on the increase in the number of undergraduate Tier 4 visa refusals for Michaelmas 2015, with the majority being due to students submitting financial evidence that did not meeting the specific UKVI requirements. The visa refusal rate is one of the core metrics for the University's Tier 4 sponsorship annual compliance assessment and the IST would be considering how the number of refusals can be reduced for next year.

Miss Reed reported that arrangements for the 'pop up' office for collection of the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) in the University Centre were now embedded. For 2016/17 students will be provided with the necessary information earlier which should

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help to ensure they opt to collect their BRP from the University, rather than the Post Office. This is particularly important for under-18s as they are unable to collect their BRP from the Post Office unaccompanied.

16/12 ACCESSIBILITY OF SCANNED DOCUMENTS AND PDFS FOR APPLICANTS

Guidance from the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) regarding the accessibility of scanned documents was received for information (AF 16/01/5). The Director of Admissions reported on the guidance, which had been produced following an issue raised by an applicant who had reported issues with the format of test documentation and its compatibility with her assistive reading software.

It was **agreed** that the guidance would be received at the Admissions Secretaries and Officers' Group and be placed in the Undergraduate Admissions Handbook for future reference.

16/13 OBTAINING VISAS FOR INTERVIEW IN PAKISTAN

The Director of Admissions reported on the known issues with applicants from Pakistan encountering difficulties in obtaining a visa in order to attend interview in Cambridge. Colleges were asked to send any specific examples to Miss Reed, including any examples of with applicants from other countries, in order for the International Student Team to follow these up with the UKVI as appropriate.

16/14 MEDIA REPORT

A media update was received for information (AF 16/01/6). Dr Almeroth-Williams reported on two reports with a Cambridge admissions focus, one of which had already been published by the Social Mobility Foundation. A statement defending the Collegiate University's admissions policies had been issued in relation to this particular report. The second report, written by the Sutton Trust, had still not been published and Dr Almeroth-Williams was working with the Director of Admissions and CAO to correct some of the unfair criticisms within this report.

It was stressed that efforts have been made with the Sutton Trust to ask them to desist in their negative coverage of the Cambridge admissions process, but this has been to no avail so far.

The Director of Admissions had been interviewed on BBC Wales in a series about education in Wales.

It was **agreed** that it would be very helpful for the Communications Office to produce guidelines for Colleges in terms of dealing with media enquiries. The importance of working collaboratively rather than opening up any individual College to criticism was stressed. It was **agreed** that Dr Almeroth-Williams would circulate some guidance for Colleges to refer to when dealing with the media.

16/15 2016 INTERVIEW DATES

Proposed timings were received (AF 16/01/7) and **approved**.

16/16 WINTER POOL 2017

Proposed timescales were received for consideration and approval (AF 16/01/8). The Director of Admissions highlighted the Cambridgeshire school term dates and noted that option two would be preferable for those with childcare responsibilities. It was stressed that it is important to encourage full use of the Pool and option two is likely to produce a bigger turnout. Option two was **approved nem con**, the 2016/17 Winter Pool will therefore take place as follows:

- Pool files to Pool venue by 1pm on Wednesday 21 December 2016 (Pool set-up)
- Winter Pool Day One: Tuesday 3 January 2017 (11am – 6pm)

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- Winter Pool Day Two: Wednesday 4 January 2017 (9am – 6pm)
- Winter Pool Day Three: Thursday 5 January 2017 (9am – 6pm)
- Interview Lists: Friday 6 January 2017 by 3pm
- Pool Clear-up: Monday 9 January 2017

It was noted that a discussion on the venue for the 2016/17 Winter Pool would be brought to the next meeting, along with the proposed posting date for decisions.

16/17 SUMMER POOL 2016

The Summer Pool will take place on Friday 19 August 2016 in Newnham College.

16/18 NOMINATIONS FOR UNDERGRADUATE SELECTION COMMITTEE FOR THE CAMBRIDGE TRUSTS

The Chair reported that there were four vacancies (one for the School of Arts and Humanities, one for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, one for the School of Biological Sciences, and one for the School of Technology and Physical Sciences) for the Undergraduate Selection Committee for the Cambridge Trusts and nominations were requested from the Admissions Forum. Dr Dickers volunteered for the vacancy for the School of Technology and Physical Sciences. All other volunteers were asked to contact Miss Reed as soon as possible.

16/19 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 9 November 2015.* (AF 16/01/9)
- ii) *Admissions Directors of Studies in Engineering Committee held on 16 November 2015.* (AF 16/01/10)
- iii) *Admissions Secretaries and Officers Group held on 19 November 2015.* (AF 16/01/11)
- iv) *Unconfirmed minutes of the Colleges Outreach Monitoring Group held on 24 November 2015.* (AF 16/01/12)
- v) *Outreach Steering Group held on 26 November 2015.* (AF 16/01/13)
Attention was drawn to minute 15.14 d) and 15.17. Mr Levinson reported on the new Brilliant Club partnership. It had been too late in the process for the Bursars' Committee to consider funding the partnership in the current academic year but CAO funding had covered this, with a view to the cost of this being considered further by the College Outreach Monitoring Group (COMG) for future years.

Mr Levinson reported that the Area Links Scheme is being fully reviewed by COMG. Colleges were reminded of the baseline level of engagement expected within this scheme (specifically contact with every maintained school Sixth Form College in their Link Area each year).
- vi) *OFFA Targets Working Party held on 1 December 2015.* (AF 16/01/14)
Attention was drawn to minute 5. The Director of Admissions reported that there are plans underway to bolster research resources within the Admissions Data Services team to cope with the additional load but, in the meantime, and until the progress against OFFA targets-related research is considered to be satisfactorily advanced, bids for research from Colleges and departments cannot be considered.

16/20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- i) *Late Mature Applications to Standard Age Colleges*
Following a recent meeting of the Mature Student Strategy Group it was requested that a process be introduced whereby CAO contacts late mature applicants applying

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to standard age Colleges to ask them to choose a Mature College (since the application would otherwise be invalid).

It was **agreed** that it would be very helpful to start this from November of each year to ensure late applicants for 15 October deadline are not contacted. It was **agreed** that Miss Reed would liaise with the Director of Admissions and Dr Tomlinson for immediate implementation.

16/21 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 19 Feb 2016 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2015/16 have been agreed as:

Friday 22 April 2016

Friday 3 June 2016

Wednesday 17 August 2016

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

HR/EP/CAO/27.01.2016

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 19 February 2016** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions, N), Dr P Wingfield (CAI), Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr J Padley (CHU), Professor J Goodman (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr M Griffin (CTH), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Cole (ED), Dr P Howell (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr M Franklin (HH), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr F Hernandez (K), Dr E Tomlinson (LC), Dr J Munns (M), Dr H Bateman (MUR), Dr M Wormald (PEM), Dr A Zsák (PET), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr S Connell (SE), Dr A Hameed (SE), Dr G Rangwala (T), Dr A Murray (TH), with Dr M Frasca-Spada (Senior Tutors' Committee), Miss H Blair (CUSU), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Miss V Mills (Admissions Secretaries and Officers Representative), Dr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group Representative), Mr J Beard (CAO), Mr T Levinson (CAO), Miss R Lister (CAO), Ms E Page (Administrative Secretary, CAO), and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

16/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, CHR), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr S Davis (G), Dr H Watson (JN), Dr S Martin (M), Dr W Galloway (PEM), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr K Dickens (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr I McNeill (TH), Dr L MacVinish (W), and Dr M Hrebeniak (W).

16/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 January were approved as an accurate record (AF 16/02/1).

16/24 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved with the exception of item 21 iv) which was unstarred.

16/25 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

16/26 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA*i) Formal Transfers for the Archaeology Tripos (16/06)*

The Director of Admissions reported that Professor Robb from the Division of Archaeology had confirmed that transfers into the Archaeology Tripos would be welcomed, whether these are students transferring after Part I in another course or affiliated students transferring to do Part II after completing a BA elsewhere.

Consideration of transfer possibilities from Human, Social and Political Sciences (HSPS) after Part I was given when the new Tripos was developed and therefore this transfer is thought to be relatively straightforward. Due to the way the course is structured, there are no specific course requirements from Part I in order to transfer to Part II. Routes have also been developed by which students can remedially take whichever Part I course necessary to their particular stream of interest in their Part II year.

It was noted that Professor Robb is yet to confirm with Student Registry what provision has been set up in the regulations regarding vetting of affiliated students for this new Tripos however it was expected that the procedure currently in place in HSPS will also apply in this case.

ii) Nominations for the Undergraduate Selection Committee for the Cambridge Trusts (16/18)

The Chair reported that the following nominations had been made:

- Dr Dickens would be representing the School of Technology, in her capacity as Admissions Tutor and representative for the School of Physical Sciences;
- Dr Correia would be representing the School of Biological Sciences in her capacity as Admissions Tutor and Fellow for Mathematical Biology;
- Dr Franklin would be representing the School of Arts and Humanities in his capacity as Admissions Tutor and Director of Studies for Anglo Saxon, Norse and Celtic.

These nominations were **approved**.

The Chair reported that a volunteer is still required for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and volunteers were asked to contact Miss Reed directly. Dr Franklin offered to also represent the School of Humanities and Social Sciences if no other volunteer came forward.

16/27 MINUTES FROM THE WORKING PARTY ON THE REVIEW OF THE ROUND

The minutes from the Working Party on the Review of the Round were received (AF 16/02/2). The Chair reported on the work already underway from the Review of the Round.

The following ongoing actions will be brought back to the April meeting of the Admissions Forum:

- *Interviewing alone*

It had been agreed that Miss Reed should consult with Colleges on the number of singleton interviews conducted each year; she will then seek advice from the Office of Intercollegiate Services (OIS). It was questioned whether a complaint had ever arisen following singleton interviews but it was agreed that this is not sufficient defense not to pursue the matter further given there are Child Protection issues that need to be considered. It was noted that open day/residential event arrangements may also need to be reviewed once advice is sought. Consideration should be given to the content of College Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and it was **agreed** that advice needs to be taken from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) as well as from the OIS.

It was **agreed** that it is important to ensure that the responsibility for Child Protection matters in Colleges rests with a suitably senior member of staff. It was **agreed** that once advice has been taken, this matter should be referred to the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC).

- *Retention of data on Subject Moderation Spreadsheets*

The Chair reported that it had been agreed Miss Reed would consult with the Data Compliance Office regarding this matter.

- *Completion of a COPA by applicants in Switzerland and the European Economic Area (EEA)*

The Chair reported that it had been agreed Miss Reed would consult with the OIS and the CAO Management Group regarding the current requirement for Swiss/EEA applicants to submit a COPA and to consider whether the requirement can be removed.

- *Second interviews for Classics*

The Chair reported that it had been agreed that the Director of Admissions would liaise with Subject Convenors for Classics and Theology to ascertain whether or not second interviews in these subjects are still required.

- *Equal opportunity monitoring and protected characteristic data from UCAS*

The Chair reported that the use (or otherwise) of this data is due to be discussed by the General Board's Education Committee (GBEC). Once the outcome of these discussions is known, the Director of Admissions and Miss Reed will draft a statement on how this data is not used during the admissions process for approval by the Admissions Forum. It was noted that some internal research on the protected characteristic data may be needed in due course, but would require further consideration.

- *Applicants studying at other UK universities*

The Chair reported that it had been agreed Miss Reed would liaise with the OIS over the legitimacy of the current position.

- *Fee Status Questionnaire*

The demand on College Admissions Offices during Michaelmas was raised and it was **agreed** that this concern should be referred to the Senior Tutors' Committee for consideration. It had been agreed Miss Reed would liaise with the OIS regarding the content and structure of the Fee Status Questionnaire. The importance of ensuring Equal or Lower Level Qualification (ELQ) applicants are aware of the financial implications of this status was stressed.

- *Video conferencing*

The Chair reported that a Working Party would be established to consider interviewing, in certain circumstances, via video conferencing and Miss Reed would shortly request volunteers.

- *Communication of decisions and agreed posting date*

The Chair reported that Admissions Officers would be consulted regarding this matter at the forthcoming meeting of the Admissions Secretaries and Officers Group (ASOG) and it was **agreed** that feedback will be brought to the April Admissions Forum for consideration.

- *POLAR3 Quintile 1 and 2 applications and financial support for their travel to interview*

The Chair reported that this matter had been referred to the Colleges Outreach and Monitoring Group (COMG) for consideration.

The following recommendations following the Review of the Round were considered for approval:

- *COPA deadline*

The Chair reported that the proposed change from 15 October to 19 October will have no impact on the Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ) deadline (22 October) or the 20 September COPA deadline for those wishing to be interviewed in China, Malaysia or Singapore. Miss Reed reported that feedback on this proposal from College Admissions Offices and the Canadian interview team had been positive. Some concerns had been raised by the Hong Kong interview team but CAO will work with them to ensure that none of their internal deadlines are impacted by the change in the COPA submission deadline.

The recommendation to move the 15 October COPA deadline to 19 October was **approved**.

- *Late applications where schools take responsibility*

The recommendation that Colleges seek approval from the Director of Admissions for the unlocking of a SAQ where a school/college accepts responsibility for the late UCAS application was discussed.

The recommendation was **approved**. It was **agreed** that communication from the school/college accepting responsibility must be in the form of a written letter on headed paper and CAO will keep a log of such cases. It was noted that this will not impact on mature applications to the Mature Colleges for the March round as the SAQs for these applicants remain unlocked until that deadline passes.

- *Transcripts*

The Chair summarised feedback from schools regarding the current transcript requirements for UK applicants. There was strong opposition to this requirement from the school sector; concerns had been expressed about information being misinterpreted, information not being comparable and the sheer volume of additional work this generates. It was stressed that it will be important to issue clear guidance in March on what the transcript requirements will be for the forthcoming round. The following wording was recommended:

Anyone who has not taken GCSEs or equivalent UK qualifications in the last three years must submit a transcript.

The recommended wording was discussed. It was noted that UK schools are strongly against the requirement for transcripts and a variety of views were expressed about this. The ongoing need for transcripts from applicants studying in the EU and overseas was stressed, although concern was raised over the fairness of requiring them from these applicants, but not those studying in the UK.

The need for transcripts from applicants studying Access to Higher Education Diplomas was stressed, especially since such applicants may have, in fact, taken GCSEs within the last three years. It was noted that clarification was also needed on the precise number of GCSEs applicants need to have taken in order to not be required to submit a transcript. It was **agreed** that a published list of 'equivalent UK qualifications' should be made available on the Undergraduate Study webpages to ensure the requirements are transparent to applicants and their advisers.

It was **agreed** that it would be very helpful for UCAS references to be more structured and this could be supported by removing contextual data about the school/college from the body of the reference (but supplying it elsewhere), thus freeing up space for more specific information about the applicant. It was reported that UCAS is planning to address this in the future.

Colleges were asked to bear in mind that, according to the most recent UCAS survey, a large proportion of schools plan to retain standalone AS Levels in some form, whether that be for particular subjects or cohorts of learners. Other methods within which to provide transcript information could be in the form of additional information in the UCAS reference or in a separate letter in support of their strongest applicants. The importance of keeping schools 'on side' was agreed and an important consideration in relation to equality for schools with less resource was stressed.

After careful consideration, during which a number of contrasting views were expressed, the proposed transcript requirement: *Anyone who has not taken GCSEs or equivalent UK qualifications in the last three years must submit a transcript* was

broadly **approved** in principle, subject to clarification on the precise public-facing wording which needs to take into account the specific requirements of the Mature Colleges and those with a small number of GCSEs. It was agreed that schools should be encouraged to supply as much information as possible on the academic profile of their pupils, especially the strongest; this could be included in the UCAS reference, or in an additional supporting letter sent directly to the relevant College. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions and Dr Tomlinson would draft a form of words which would need to be approved by circulation.

- *Pooling of applicants due to visa difficulties for interview*

The recommendation that Colleges place in the Winter Pool any applicant who is invited for interview but is unable to attend in December owing to visa difficulties (and who has not been interviewed by other means, such as video conferencing) was **approved**. It was noted that some Colleges will need to change the wording on their website to reflect this new arrangement as it is important that no applicant is disadvantaged due to circumstances beyond their control.

It was clarified that in cases where an applicant has failed to make a valid application, then they can be rejected in the usual way. It was further **agreed** that this policy should be made clear in the Winter Pool documentation for Admissions Tutors, circulated by CAO during Michaelmas, to ensure consistency of practice. It was noted that the numbers of such applicants are small but it is important to ensure that they are not rejected outright due to circumstances beyond their control without first being placed in the Winter Pool, if the preference College is unable/unwilling to arrange a January interview, in case their application may be of interest to another College.

- *Compulsory pooling criteria*

The Chair expressed his thanks to Dr Tomlinson for the guidance she had supplied to him and the Director of Admissions on what strong EU applicant profiles may look like and explained that this information would prove to be a very useful reference point. It was noted that EU applicants are likely to be at the highest risk of deselection in light of the new admissions assessments, so such guidance is particularly helpful. The recommendation that the guidance is included in the Winter Pool documentation, but making it clear that this does not constitute compulsory pooling criteria, was **approved**.

The recommendation to empower Subject Convenors to contact relevant Colleges to request that particularly strong EU or overseas applicants are placed in the Pool, where they are not being made an offer was also **approved**. It was noted, however, that Subject Convenors cannot *require* a College to pool in these circumstances (unless they meet one or more of the previously established compulsory pooling criteria, in which case such applicants *must* be pooled). It was **agreed** that consideration needs to be given on whether anything more can be done on the presentation of EU qualification information on the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets so that Subject Convenors are aware of such applicants.

The recommendation that Colleges should consult with their partner Mature College when making decisions on whom to place in the Winter Pool, in the same manner they should consult on deselection decisions, was **approved**.

The recommendation that the compulsory pooling criteria for those taking UK A Levels, and where there is a full complement of UMS (as defined by three or more modular A Levels), as an average of 93% for Arts subjects and 94% for Science subjects (specifically 94% in Science or Mathematics subjects for those applying for Computer Science, Engineering, Natural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine) was discussed. After careful consideration it was felt that this tweak to the pooling criteria could actually create more problems than it resolves and therefore the recommendation was **not approved**.

The following items were additionally considered by the Working Party on the Review of the Round:

i) Single Tripos offers for Joint Tripos applicants

The Director of Admissions reported that it had been clarified that where an applicant is assessed for one of the new joint Triposes, but is only deemed strong enough for an offer in one of the two subjects, then they could be made a changed course offer for the stronger, single, subject instead. However, if the applicant in question is just narrowly squeezed out by competition in the 'weaker' subject then they should be placed in the Winter Pool in case any other College would be willing to offer for the joint Tripos.

It was queried at what level an applicant would be deemed 'unacceptable' for the Joint Tripos, but acceptable for the single Tripos, and it was **agreed** that further clarification was needed on this matter.

It was noted that Poolside meetings will take place for Joint Tripos subjects and these will need to be scheduled carefully. It was **agreed** that arrangements for subject moderation in the new Joint Triposes needed to be clarified as soon as possible.

ii) Re-interviewing applicants when they have already been interviewed overseas

The Director of Admissions reported concerns from the Working Party on Overseas Interviews regarding scholarship applicants who had been called for interview in Cambridge when they had already been interviewed overseas. The previously agreed position (that those who are shortlisted for an overseas interview must not also be called to Cambridge for interview except for subjects in which there is no suitable interviewer on the overseas team, for example Architecture, MML and Music) was stressed again. It was **agreed** that, where a College feels it needs to have some input into the interview process, they should do so in consultation with the overseas interview teams.

16/28 MINUTES FROM THE WORKING PARTY ON OVERSEAS INTERVIEWS

The minutes from the Working Party on Overseas Interviews and a list of proposed overseas interviewers for 2016/17 were received (AF 16/02/3a,b). The proposed list of interviewers for 2016/17 was **approved** noting that not all those listed may actually interview. The Director of Admissions drew specific attention to a vacancy for an Engineering interviewer in Singapore and volunteers were asked to contact Dr Bowkett directly. The proposal to interview in China, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Canada for the 2017 cycle was **approved**.

The Director of Admissions reported that work is underway on defining a job specification for the Overseas Interview Team Leader role. It was noted that the general consensus is that overseas interviewers should not be paid. The aim of the Overseas Interview Team Leader role is to coordinate all interviewing schemes so that they operate in the same manner. The role holder will be remunerated appropriately for the position. It was noted that the International Admissions and Recruitment Working Group (IARWG) is now jointly chaired by the Colleges and the University and, as such, is now authorised to make decisions on long term strategies in relation to overseas interviews and related matters.

The Director of Admissions reported on the upcoming turmoil with Malaysian scholarships. Recent news articles have suggested that JPA scholarships will not be available for this year's applicants and there is a danger current offer holders will have their scholarships withdrawn. It was also noted that falling oil prices have endangered scholarships provided by private companies such as Petronas.

16/29 UPDATE ON THE 2017 ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENTS

A summary table providing details of the format and duration of assessments and the letter sent to schools regarding the introduction of admissions assessments were received (AF 16/02/4a,b).

The Director of Admissions reported that History of Art had now confirmed a 60 minute assessment incorporating a visual analysis where candidates will be given a selection of images and be asked to compare them. The final assessment length for Computer Science has not yet been confirmed. It was noted that Land Economy had not yet fully decided on an assessment model but are likely to opt for the TSA, if available. All other subjects have settled on a model and are working on the supporting materials for the Undergraduate Study website. The importance of the supporting materials being made publicly available in March, as previously announced, was stressed.

The Director of Admissions confirmed that applicants for History and *ab initio* Russian would take the History pre-interview assessment, but their language aptitude would be assessed in interview.

The Director of Admissions confirmed that, where a subject uses a pre-interview assessment, Colleges are at liberty to set their own at-interview assessment should they wish to do so, providing the College informs applicants that this is an additional requirement by making it clear on both the Undergraduate Study website and the College's own website.

A discussion on the pre-interview assessments and the timing of the issue of results in relation to when deselection decisions need to happen took place. The Director of Admissions reported that, whilst the essay/written comprehension scripts would be available shortly after the pre-interview assessment is sat, results from the Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) section will not be available until later in November (on a similar timescale to the BMAT) due to practicalities and resource availability at the Admissions Testing Service (ATS). It was noted that ATS is investigating ways in which it might prioritise the processing of results of some subjects.

Considerable concern was raised in relation to the impact the timing of these results will have on deselection, which will have a particularly significant impact on Colleges receiving large numbers of applications. Serious concern was expressed over the potential for reputational damage to the collegiate University if applicants are deselected before the results are known. Concern was also expressed over the cost of the pre-interview assessments, particularly where there is a high risk of deselection based on the paper application record. The cost implications of the pre-interview assessments were discussed and a number of issues and concerns were raised. It was noted that there will be an extraordinary meeting of the Bursars' Committee on 10 March at which these matters will be discussed in full detail. The importance of Colleges receiving clarity on the full costs involved with the pre-interview assessments was stressed. It was noted that there would be no costs passed on to Colleges for the at-interview assessments.

It was stressed that the pre-interview assessments are one strand of evidence within a broader holistic academic assessment, and that caution should be applied when interpreting the tests in the first year of use until research can be undertaken to determine how effective they are. It was noted that there should still be a large amount of UMS data available during the coming admissions round against which the assessment results could be compared. It was suggested that, if these show a good correlation, it would be reasonable to use the test results as one component of the deselection decision making process, particularly for candidates without UMS data.

Trinity College proposed that, if Colleges cannot be guaranteed that results from the MCQ section of the assessment will be available by a certain date, for example 16 November, then use of these elements of the assessment should be deferred to the 2018 admissions cycle. A vote took place in which four Colleges voted in favour of the proposal and sixteen Colleges voted against. It was **agreed**, however, that all practical means of speeding up the process of getting results out to Colleges should be explored without delay, and the Director of Admissions undertook to do this.

The procedure for applicants failing to register for the assessment in the first year was discussed and it was reported that the University of Oxford had operated a 'mop up' assessment centre in Oxford for such applicants in the first two years of their testing system, until the structure had become firmly embedded into their process.

After a full discussion, during which a wide range of views were expressed, it was **agreed** that clear and unambiguous information is needed urgently on how the admissions assessments will be used in the forthcoming round as well as clarity on the exact timings and the costs for Colleges.

16/30 OFFA ACCESS AGREEMENT 2017-18

A paper regarding the proposed Output Area Classification (OAC) target was received for consideration (AF 16/02/5). The Director of Admissions explained that Dr Horner's research suggested a suitable admissions target for flagged OAC applicants might be ~8.2%. Whilst only 7.3% of admissions were of flagged students in the most recent year, historical data show that 7.9% is possible, even before introducing a specific target. Yearly milestones for an OFFA Target could chart progress from 7.3%, to a new high of 8%, with a ceiling of 8.2%. Targets for the next 5 years could be 7.4% (2016-17); 7.6%; 7.8%; 8.0%; 8.2% (2020-21). To achieve these without lowering offer levels for flagged applicants, it may be necessary to increase the offer rates and cover ratios for flagged applicants. The possibility of open offers for flagged applicants was also mooted.

For its part, the Admissions Forum **approved** the proposed OAC target for inclusion in the 2017 Access Agreement.

16/31 INCREASED NUMBER OF OFFERS IN ENGINEERING

A paper was received for consideration (AF 16/02/6). The Director of Admissions reported that the Department of Engineering would like to increase the number of undergraduates admitted to the Engineering Tripos. The department has the facilities and systems in place to readily allow them to increase their intake by a further 10%. It was noted that Engineering changed its Tripos grading guidelines last year to raise the proportion of students awarded a I and II.1 to 30% and 50% respectively, which they hope will have a positive impact on Baxter scores.

The desire of the Department was noted.

16/32 DECLINED OFFER ANALYSIS

Analysis of the number of declined offers for the 2013, 2014 and 2015 cycles was received for information (AF 16/02/7). The Chair reported that this information had been very useful for reference. It was **agreed** that this should become an annual analysis for reference.

16/33 INTERVIEW SCHEDULING IN HUMAN, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES

The Director of Admissions reported that Human, Social and Political Sciences (HSPS) is now one of the largest subjects and it would be preferable if interviews could take place at the beginning of the interviewing period to assist with subject moderation

procedures. It was **agreed** that this matter would also be raised with the Admissions Secretaries and Officers Group (ASOG).

16/34 REPORT FROM THE COLLEGE OUTREACH MONITORING GROUP HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2016

The Director of Admissions reported that the Colleges' Outreach Monitoring Group (COMG) has been set up to build connections with key constituents of the collegiate University to ensure the collective outreach spending commitment is met. The Director of Admissions summarised the current work of the group and specifically highlighted discussions on a national outreach scheme proposal which is a further development of the 'Area Links plus/HE+' proposals. A review of the Area Links Scheme is planned to go ahead and an 'Area Links amnesty' could be put in place before any roll-out of the new scheme.

A proposal from the Faculty of Mathematics regarding development of a pilot STEP Correspondence Course had been received at the most recent COMG meeting and further information will be provided in due course. It was noted that College funding previously used for the STEP Easter School might be diverted to the new Correspondence Course.

16/35 CAMSIS INCIDENT INVESTIGATION REVIEW AND CAMSIS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP MINUTES HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2016

A draft review was received along with the minutes of the CamSIS Special Interest Group (SIG) held on 28 January 2016 (AF 16/02/8a,b). Professor Goodman reported on the draft Incident Investigation Review report, produced by the University Information Services (UIS), and expressed concern that the report had not recognised the significant work carried out in CAO, despite this explicitly being requested by the Student Information Systems Committee.

The SIG has requested assurances that there is appropriate support during critical points in the admissions cycle and the UIS has responded to note that they will shortly be consulting with key stakeholders on the required service levels. Professor Goodman reported that UIS has advised that work on contingency plans is in progress in case of further issues.

16/36 WINTER POOL VENUE

The Chair reported that, due to building works at Newnham College, Homerton College would host the 2017 Winter Pool. It was **agreed** that the 2017 posting date and method of communication for decisions would first be considered by Admissions Officers. Proposals would be brought to the April Admissions Forum for approval.

16/37 COMMUNICATION ON THE STUDENT ROOM

The Director of Admissions reported on a proposal to establish a Working Group to develop formal protocols for use when communicating on The Student Room and this was **approved**. It was noted that an informal group had met previously and, if willing, members of that group should form part of the membership of the Working Group in order to take this work forward. It was **agreed** that Miss Lister and Dr Wingfield would also join the Working Group.

16/38 MEDIA UPDATE

A report was received (AF 16/02/9). Dr Almeroth-Williams reported on a new report from HESA regarding the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NSSEC) which has been publicly acknowledged to be of poor quality.

It was noted that the social mobility reporting shows no sign of abating.

16/39 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS

A summary of recently serviced FOI requests by CAO was received for information (AF 16/02/10). The Director of Admissions reported that she is responsible for communicating with Colleges when CAO responds to requests for specific named College data, or where Colleges need to be aware of broader requests of particular interest. It was **agreed** that the summary report would become a standing item at the Admissions Forum in future.

16/40 COLLECTION OF A2 UMS

The Chair reported that it has previously been helpful to continue to collect this data for possible future research purposes. It was **agreed** that, as some UMS data will still be available, it will be worthwhile to collect the data for another cycle.

16/41 ANNUAL ADMISSIONS BRIEFING

It was noted that the Annual Admissions Briefing will take place on Friday 30 September 2016 at Magdalene College.

16/42 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Outreach Steering Group held on 14 January 2016* (AF 16/02/11)
- ii) *OFFA Targets Working Party held on 14 January 2016* (AF 16/02/12)
- iii) *Colleges Outreach Monitoring Group held on 20 January 2016* (AF 16/02/13)
- iv) *Mature Strategy Group held on 21 January 2016* (AF 16/02/14)

The Director of Admissions reported on a proposal to establish a small Working Group to look at the possibility of introducing a foundation programme in the Liberal Arts and this was **approved**. The programme could act as a bolt on for applicants who have studied Access Diplomas, for example. It was requested that volunteers for the Working Group should contact Miss Reed directly.

- v) *Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 1 February 2016* (AF 16/02/15)
- vi) *Information and Publications Sub Group held on 3 February 2016* (AF 16/02/16)

Attention was drawn to minute 16/08. Miss Lister reported on the discussion regarding College lists of Director of Studies on the Undergraduate Study website. It was noted that this generates a lot of work for Colleges and contradicts the University's general advice on how to choose a College. The proposal to remove Directors of Studies listings from the Undergraduate Study website was **approved** and it was **agreed** that users of this website will be directed to College websites for such information instead.

- vii) *OFFA Targets Working Party held on 10 February 2016* (AF 16/02/17)

Mr Beard reported that Dr Horner's recent research using national data had indicated that the current POLAR3 target of 13% (by 2019-20) may not be achievable. The OFFA Targets Working Party had therefore agreed that Mr Beard should inform OFFA that the University's POLAR3 target has been reviewed based on national UCAS data, with the result that the target needs to be reduced to 12.5% (by 2019-20) whilst stressing that this is still a stretching target based on the current position.

16/43 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) Russell Group Teachers' Conference

The Chair reported that, once a date has been confirmed, there will be a call for Admissions Tutor volunteers for the Cambridge stand.

ii) Ms Page's departure

The Chair reported that Ms Page will be leaving the University in April. Sincere thanks were expressed to Ms Page for her hard work and support with the business of the Admissions Forum.

16/44 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 22 April 2016 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2015/16 have been agreed as:

Friday 3 June 2016

Wednesday 17 August 2016

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

HR/EP/CAO/26.02.2016

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 22 April 2016** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, CHR), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions, N), Dr P Wingfield (CAI), Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr J Padley (CHU), Professor J Goodman (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr D Bainbridge (CTH), Dr M Griffin (CTH), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Correia (DOW), Dr M Gemelos (ED), Dr C Crawford (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr M Franklin (HH), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr B Post (JE), Dr H Watson (JN), Dr E Tomlinson (LC), Dr S Martin (M), Dr H Bateman (MUR), Dr W Galloway (PEM), Dr M Wormald (PEM), Mr S Mandelbrote (PET), Dr K Dickers (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr I McNeill (TH), Dr L MacVinish (W), Dr M Hrebeniak (W).

In attendance: Dr P Fara (Senior Tutors' Committee), Miss H Blair (CUSU), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Miss V Mills (Admissions Secretaries and Officers' Group), Mr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group), Mr T Levinson (CAO), and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

16/45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr E So (M), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr A Hameed (SE), Dr A Murray (TH), Mr J Beard (CAO) and Miss R Lister (CAO).

16/46 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 February were approved as an accurate record (AF 16/03/1).

16/47 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved.

16/48 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

16/49 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

It was noted that a number of ongoing matters arising from the Review of the Round will be brought to the June meeting.

16/50 ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENTS

A paper was received for information (AF 16/03/2). The Director of Admissions summarised progress on the arrangements for the forthcoming admissions assessments. It was **agreed** that the issues log should come to each meeting of the Admissions Forum as a live and ongoing document. The key dates and deadlines were noted – it was stressed that timing is very tight and the importance of meeting each deadline was acknowledged.

The following matters were considered:

- *Pre-Interview Assessment Mark Scheme*

The proposed mark scheme for pre-interview assessments was discussed. The Admissions Testing Service (ATS) has proposed a BMAT style mark scale between 1 and 9 (with 0 if no questions are answered correctly). It was suggested that a normalised score would be better than a straight percentage, especially if used in applicant feedback. It was noted that there are a number of ways in which to scale

results and it was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would circulate the proposed ATS methodology to Admissions Tutors. It was further **agreed** that this matter should be discussed in more detail at the next meeting of the Admissions Forum.

- *Trial of MCQ element of the sample tests with incoming First Years*

A proposal in which incoming first years could be asked to take the Multiple Choice elements of the sample papers during the first week of Michaelmas term was discussed. It was noted that this might also be useful for research purposes, since these students will still have UMS data. Some concerns were expressed about how students would view such a request and it was felt that factors such as lack of motivation could lead to skewed results.

Sample sizes were raised as a potential problem and it was **agreed** that, if such an experiment does take place, it would need to be for the full cohort in any given subject. It was reported that Veterinary Medicine is particularly interested in asking incoming first years to take the Biological Sciences Admissions Assessment since consideration is currently been given as to whether this assessment would be a better fit than the BMAT.

- *Section 2 Booklet Length*

The ideal length of the Section 2 booklet was discussed. Given their expertise, it was **agreed** that overseas interviewers and the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) should be consulted on how much most students are likely to be able to write in one hour or forty minutes.

- *Deselection Decisions*

A discussion took place on when Colleges should send out deselection decisions to those applying for subjects with a pre-interview assessment. The basic principle, that decisions on whether or not to invite an applicant to interview should only take place once the admissions assessment results are known, was stressed. It was noted, however, that ineligible applicants could be communicated with before that point. It was **agreed** that a clear and strict definition of what constitutes an ineligible application will be needed to ensure consistency and fairness; consideration also needs to be given as to how open applications will be handled in this regard. It was suggested that it may be preferable to make it clear to applicants that Colleges may deselect their application before the November admissions assessments take place.

It was **agreed** that deselection decisions on valid applications should not be communicated before 14 November (when the first set of admissions assessment results are expected). Applicants should be advised in advance that they should expect to hear whether or not they are being invited to interview from 14 November onwards. It was **agreed** that a two week notice period for an invitation to interview should be the minimum notification.

It was stressed that there will be no embargo on the communication of deselection/interview notifications to those applying for subjects with an at-interview assessment.

- *De-registration of Ineligible/Weak Applicants*

It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions should continue to investigate ways in which ineligible applicants can be de-registered from the pre-interview assessments.

- *Initial Assessment and Subsequent Formal Marking of Section 2 (Script element)*

Colleges were reminded that Section 2 of the pre-interview assessments will not be marked by the ATS. Instead, it was suggested that initially, given time pressures during the invitation to interview stage, Colleges broadly group these into strong/medium/weak categories. This suggestion met with broad agreement and it was stressed that this is just one factor in combination with various other pieces of information used in the assessment of applications.

It was **agreed** that each subject should have a set of coherent guidelines on how to fully mark Section 2. Concerns were raised in relation to consistency, especially in small subjects where Colleges may only have one application to assess. It was noted that some of the small subjects may choose to mark the Section 2 scripts centrally, although it was acknowledged that this procedure would not be practical for larger subjects. The difficulties in analysing the predictive validity of Section 2 if not all of the scripts are to be marked were noted with concern. It was **agreed** that a Section 2 mark for every candidate interviewed seems to be a reasonable compromise, although it was noted that correlations would be skewed if the weaker scripts are not fully marked. It was **agreed** that it would be very helpful for Colleges to have confirmation of which subjects will centrally mark Section 2; the Director of Admissions agreed to collate this information.

- *Shared Comprehension Element*

It was **agreed** that, where there is a shared comprehension element, then the assessment of this element should be across all the subjects taking that element (40 minutes and 1 hour respectively), so they are graded all together, rather than separately by subject.

- *Mop-Up Sessions*

A discussion took place on the desirability of mop-up sessions for those who failed to register/take the pre-interview assessments. It was **agreed** that Colleges would need to be relatively lenient in the first few years as the number of applicants failing to register could be large. Furthermore, there needs to be leeway for those with genuinely strong mitigating circumstances. It was stressed that as much as possible would be done to ensure that applicants register to take the pre-interview assessments.

The format of the mop-up pre-interview assessments was considered with suggestions such as using an alternative time zone version or using the mature one-hour assessment being mooted as options. It was **agreed** that some form of written assessment should be the baseline and beyond that Colleges should use their discretion as to what they ask applicants to do. The importance of treating applicants fairly and consistently was stressed. Concerns about the format of the mop-up sessions were raised from an administrative perspective, especially in terms of interview scheduling, which is already very complex.

A discussion took place regarding mature applicants at standard age Colleges who fail to register for the pre-interview assessments. It was **agreed** that it would be preferable for such applications to be handled through a mop-up session, rather than re-allocating them to a mature College.

It was agreed that in the first year of operation of these assessments there would be some flexibility in operating practices. The Director of Admissions would adjudicate in borderline cases with the aid of a group of colleagues involved in the process.

It was **agreed** that mop-up arrangements should be monitored carefully and kept under review, especially in light of experience in the first year.

- *Mature College Assessments*

It was reported that the Mature Colleges are working on their versions of the admissions assessments, all of which will take place at interview (BMAT excepted).

- *Use of Admissions Assessment Results*

It was **agreed** that Colleges should be under no compulsion with the way in which the assessment results are used in the admissions process. Effective communication and consultation amongst Colleges will be essential. Clear guidance on the use of assessment results in applicant feedback should be provided to Colleges.

- *Compulsory Pooling*

There was no desire to introduce a compulsory pooling criterion based on admissions assessment results in the early years of introduction.

- *Communication of Results*

It was noted that the ATS releases results of the ELAT to applicants in January (after the posting date). Consideration was given as to whether or not it would be helpful for the ATS to release the other pre-interview admissions assessment results but it was felt that this would be better handled through feedback (ie without reference to precise results).

- *Organ Scholars*

The timing of the assessment of Organ Scholarship applications was discussed. It was noted that those applying for Medicine are still required to take the BMAT even though they are assessed academically earlier in the process. It was **agreed** that all applicants should take the relevant admissions assessment and, as such, the Director of Admissions should consult with the Music Awards Working Party regarding this matter.

- *Illegible Section 2 Scripts*

A query over how to handle illegible Section 2 scripts was raised. It was **agreed** that this matter should be referred back to the ATS to ascertain how such matters are handled elsewhere.

- *Formal Review*

It was **agreed** that a formal review of the whole admissions assessment process should take place as early as possible in the New Year. It was **agreed** that it would be helpful to involve schools in this process too.

It was proposed that a permanent Advisory Body (with external representation (for example Heads of Schools and Heads of VI Forms)) should be established to consider matters of common interest.

16/51 NOTIFICATION OF OPEN ALLOCATION TO APPLICANTS

The Director of Admissions reported that this is no longer an issue since applicants will not be required to enter the College they applied to on their admissions assessment script.

16/52 SUBJECT CONVENOR REPORTS AND SUBJECT MODERATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR JOINT TRIPOSES

Reports from Subject Convenors on the 2015/16 admissions round were received for information (AF 16/03/3). The Chair reported on the varying content, size and structure of the reports as well as the different ways in which data/statistics is used. It was **agreed** that Miss Reed should consider what data/statistics might more usefully be provided to Subject Convenors in future and also the feasibility of a pre-populated skeleton report.

It was stressed that Directors of Studies are meant to complete the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets, Subject Convenors are only meant to collate this information, rather than have to chase individuals.

The low numbers of Economics applications from non-selective state schools was highlighted as a matter of great concern. It was **agreed** that this matter should be monitored carefully, especially in light of the forthcoming A Level reforms and the likely limited availability of Further Mathematics within maintained sector schools.

It was noted that the Bursars' Committee had approved funding for the new STEP Correspondence Course which will replace the STEP Easter School. This new initiative will provide a larger number of pupils with easy access to mathematical support from the start of Year 12. It was agreed that this was a positive development.

Mixed views were expressed about the usefulness of in-person pre-pool moderation meetings. It was noted that the attendance rate at in-person pre-pool meetings has not always been as good as hoped, but equally some questions were raised about the effectiveness of electronic pre-pool moderation. The view was expressed that in the coming years it would be even more important for Colleges to meet and consult collectively pre-pool. The importance of ensuring that Admissions Tutors are copied in to all correspondence from Subject Convenors was stressed.

The need to ensure Subject Convenors are appropriately supported was stressed and it was acknowledged that the forthcoming admissions rounds will be even more challenging than usual with the introduction of admissions assessments. A suggestion to have two Subject Convenors in larger subjects was considered and it was noted that this arrangement appears to work well in Law. It was **agreed** that this suggestion should be explored further and that consideration should be given to one of the two Subject Convenors not being a serving Admissions Tutor, in order to avoid constraints on time during the Michaelmas term.

16/53 LATE MATURE APPLICATIONS TO STANDARD AGE COLLEGES

A paper outlining the reallocation process for late mature applications to standard age Colleges was received for information (AF 16/03/4). Miss Reed confirmed that this new process would begin from October 2016. It was **agreed** that this new process should be highlighted to Admissions Administrators and details should also be included in the Undergraduate Admissions Handbook.

16/54 COLLEGE WEBSITE INFORMATION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

The Director of Admissions reported on a communication she had received from Dr Reid regarding information provided on College websites and Freedom of Information

(FOI) requests. It was noted that Dr Reid's view is that Colleges could provide more detailed information on their websites to assist potential applicants. It was noted, however, that provision of more information on individual College websites might simply lead to more complex FOI requests. It was **agreed** that it would be better to review the information already published on the university-wide Study Cam website to see whether this can be enhanced. It was noted that there could be more consistency across Colleges in terms of the information provided on their websites.

16/55 NEAR MISS PROTOCOL

The Chair reported on the usual process of requesting UMS from applicants who narrowly miss their offers in August. Colleges were reminded that reprieves in numbers managed subjects are not permitted until the Director of Admissions can assess the situation in August. It is also best practice not to relieve any near miss International Baccalaureate offer holders until the wider field of results are known.

16/56 OFFA ACCESS AGREEMENT

Mr Levinson reported that the draft OFFA Access Agreement had been circulated to Heads of Houses, Senior Tutors, Admissions Tutors and all members of relevant committees. The draft has been received and considered by Council and ultimately approved. The UAC Access Agreement Working Party was given permission by Council to make any further small changes ahead of requesting UCJC final approval next week. It was noted that the Working Party has requested some minor amendments including the removal of reference to the National Outreach Programme and inclusion of a paragraph regarding the CUSU review of the Cambridge Bursary Scheme. Once approved by University and Colleges Joint Committee (UCJC), the Access Agreement will be submitted to OFFA on 27 April. Final approval from OFFA is expected towards the end of June.

Mr Levinson also reported on the College expenditure survey which was recently completed. Colleges are thought to be on target for overall expenditure in 2015/16. Thought now needs to be given as to how activities are targeted, presented and measured in order to ensure coherent presentation and alignment with the OFFA agenda. Admissions Tutors were encouraged to work very closely with Bursars to ensure join up. The Director of Admissions reported on the recent Area Links amnesty and highlighted that this would be a good opportunity for collaborative outreach work between Colleges.

The new STEP Correspondence Course was noted and it was hoped that all state school pupils will be able to take advantage of this resource.

It was noted that the research function in CAO would soon be enhanced to ensure appropriate levels of resource for the research agenda.

In response to a query in relation to College expenditure on bursaries, it was confirmed that this is **not** OFFA countable.

16/57 OXFORD INTERNATIONAL AQA EXAMINATIONS

The Chair reported on the new Oxford International Examinations offered by AQA. It was noted that AQA was following the coupled AS/A Level structure which should be welcomed. It was noted that the Overseas Qualifications Reference Group had recently reviewed the specifications and had found them perfectly adequate. It was **agreed** that these A Levels should be considered in the same way as all other A Level examinations. Colleges were reminded of the agreed position not to differentiate between the different Awarding Bodies offering AS/A Level qualifications.

16/58 WELSH BACCALAUREATE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

The Chair reported on recent discussions with teachers in Wales in relation to the wording of the current entrance requirements for those studying the Welsh Baccalaureate. It was noted that the terminology currently used is wrong; since the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification itself is known as the 'core' and the A-levels are options within the Advanced Diploma. The Director of Admissions therefore proposed the following wording:

Offers are conditional on three A Level subjects studied as options for the Advanced Diploma. The core may be taken into consideration in assessment for admission, and used as part of an offer.

Some concern was expressed that this could be seen as a stiffer offer compared to other applicants taking A Levels only. However, it was broadly **agreed** that this formulation was less ambiguous for applicants and their advisers. It was **agreed** that the proposed wording should be placed on the Study Cam website as soon as possible. Colleges are at liberty to state on their own websites that they will only consider the A Levels studied within the Advanced Diploma, should they wish to do so.

16/59 IRISH LEAVING CERTIFICATE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Guidance on the new points system and a proposed revision to the typical entrance requirements were received for information (AF 16/03/5a, b). It was noted that the grading system will change from A1-E to H1-H6. It was **agreed** that the typical entrance requirements should be updated to reflect this change and the following wording was **approved**:

Typical offers for applicants taking the Irish Leaving Certificate would be based on A1/H1 in 3 relevant subjects at Higher Level. Applicants for Medicine and Veterinary Medicine may be asked to take an IGCSE (or equivalent) in the science subject not taken within the Irish Leaving Certificate.

16/60 MEDIA UPDATE

A report was received from Dr Almeroth-Williams for information (AF 16/03/6). Dr Almeroth-Williams highlighted the positive interview with the Director of Admissions and The Guardian in relation to the impact of A Level reforms across the UK. Attention was also drawn to the introduction of a new foundation programme at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

16/61 ANNUAL UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS STATISTICS

The Annual Admissions Statistics are due to be published in May and Colleges will receive a copy before official publication.

16/62 UCAS CHANGES FOR 2017

It was noted that there will be no major changes to the UCAS scheme for 2017 entry.

16/63 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS

A summary of recently serviced FOI requests by CAO was received for information (AF 16/03/7).

16/64 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) Teachers Engagement Strategy Group held on 3 February 2016 (AF 16/03/8)
- ii) OFFA Targets Working Party held on 10 February 2016 (AF 16/03/9)
- iii) College Outreach Monitoring Group held on 12 February 2016 (AF 16/03/10)

- iv) CAO Management Group held on 15 February 2016 (AF 16/03/11)
- v) Outreach Steering Group held on 23 February 2016 (AF 16/03/12)
- vi) International Admissions Recruitment Working Group held on 23 February 2016 (AF 16/03/13)
- vii) Admissions Secretaries and Officers Group held on 25 February 2016 (AF 16/03/14)
- viii) Overseas Qualifications Reference Group held on 1 March 2016 (AF 16/03/15)
- ix) CamSIS Special Interest Group held on 3 March 2016 (AF 16/03/16)
- x) College Outreach Monitoring Group held on 7 March 2016 (AF 16/03/17)

Attention was drawn to minute 7(iii). The Director of Admissions reminded Colleges of the collective agreement that where an interviewee is required to stay overnight in Cambridge then accommodation and meals should be provided free of charge.

The possibility of travel cost reimbursement for those most in need was discussed. It was noted that many Colleges have been approached about reimbursement in the past and such requests have always been handled sympathetically and on a case by case basis. It was noted that the feasibility of a more formal scheme would require careful consideration and it was **agreed** that a Working Party should be established to consider this matter in further detail. Volunteers were asked to contact Miss Reed directly.

- xi) Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 7 March 2016 (AF 16/03/18)

16/65 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

i) *St John's Bursary Scheme*

The recently announced Bursary Scheme was discussed and it was noted that this matter would be widely discussed at a number of other forthcoming committees. It was **agreed** that the way in which College specific OFFA targets are calculated should be considered in light of schemes such as this.

Colleges were reminded of the agreed protocol in relation to College Bursaries and the publicity of these. Such schemes should only be advertised on the College website (rather than the University website) with clear reference to the Cambridge Bursary Scheme. The Admissions Forum reiterated its support for this previously agreed position, nem con.

Dr Almeroth-Williams was thanked for ensuring the St John's announcement was presented within the wider context of the Cambridge Bursary Scheme.

16/66 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 3 June 2016 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2015/16 and 2016/17 have been agreed as:

Wednesday 17 August 2016
 Friday 14 October 2016
 Friday 18 November 2016
 Friday 20 January 2017
 Friday 24 February 2017
 Friday 21 April 2017

Confidential

Unconfirmed

Friday 2 June 2017

Wednesday 16 August 2017

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

HR/CAO/25.04.2016

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 3 June 2016** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, CHR), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions, N), Dr P Wingfield (CAI), Dr S Boss (CHU), Dr J Padley (CHU), Professor J Goodman (CL), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr D Bainbridge (CTH), Dr M Griffin (CTH), Dr M Correia (DOW), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Cole (ED), Dr C Crawford (EM), Dr R Henderson (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr F Hernandez (K), Dr E Tomlinson (LC), Dr J Munns (M), Dr H Bateman (MUR), Dr W Galloway (PEM), Dr A Zsák (PET), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr S Connell (SE), Dr S Eves (SE), Dr K Dickers (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr I McNeill (TH), Dr M Hrebeniak (W), with Dr P Fara (Senior Tutors' Committee), Miss H Blair (CUSU), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Miss V Mills (Admissions Secretaries and Officers' Group), Mr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group), Mr J Beard (CAO), Mr T Levinson (CAO), Miss A Eagling (Administrative Secretary, CAO), and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

16/67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr B Post (JE), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr S Martin (M), Dr M Wormald (PEM), Dr A Murray (TH), Dr L MacVinish (W) and Miss R Lister (CAO).

16/68 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 April were approved as an accurate record (AF 16/04/1).

The Admissions Forum **agreed**, at the suggestion of the Chair, that future minutes should be briefer and more concerned with actions than the full reporting of discussion.

16/69 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved.

16/70 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

16/71 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

i) Working Party on Interviewee Travel Costs (minute 16/64 (x))

It was noted that a meeting of this Working Party will take place on 6 June.

16/72 ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENTS UPDATE

An update paper and the assessment issues log were received for information (AF 16/04/2a,b). The Director of Admissions summarised progress on the arrangements for the forthcoming admissions assessments.

i) Pre-interview assessment mark scheme

Feedback was sought on whether the Rasch analysis proposed by the Admissions Testing Service (ATS) suits the selection purposes of the Colleges. Some concerns were raised over this method.

It was confirmed that the ATS will provide raw marks which will be sent to Admissions Tutors. Colleges who wish to could then use them alongside the scaled marks. It was **agreed** that the issue of how to scale marks should be

referred back to the ATS with Dr Wingfield and Dr Martin's comments for consideration.

ii) *MML and AMES admissions assessment*

It was **agreed** that AMES applicants with an MML language will take the MML at-interview assessment as well as the AMES pre-interview assessment, in the same way that History and Modern Language applicants will take both the History and MML assessments.

It was **agreed** that MML applicants with a classical language (Latin or Greek) will take the MML at-interview assessment and have their classical language, which they will be taking at A Level, assessed during their interview, in the usual way.

iii) *Issues log*

A newly formed Steering Group will meet on 7 June to review project plans and risk logs. The request to change the format of the PBS assessment will also be considered by this group.

iv) *MCQ results and timing*

It was noted that CAO is working closely with ATS on the timescales for the MCQ results and a detailed timetable will be brought to the next meeting of the Admissions Forum.

v) *Section 2 arrangements*

It was **agreed** that the 60 minute Section 2 booklets should be 8 sides of A4 to allow for double line spacing. It was **agreed** that confirmation should be sought on whether applicants will be asked to write on both sides, and if there will be spare booklets available should applicants run out of pages. It was further **agreed** that Oxford should be consulted regarding their experiences of this.

vi) *At interview assessments timing and practical arrangements*

Miss Reed and a group of Admissions Administrators are working through the at-interview assessment timings and practical arrangements. A report will be brought to the Admissions Forum in August.

The following matters were also considered:

- *Illegible scripts*

It was **agreed** that these would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis in this first year.

- *Protocol for use of scripts at interview*

The possible use of Section 2 or at-interview assessment scripts at interview was discussed, and various issues considered.

There was no consensus on this matter and it was suggested that it be down to Colleges to decide on the use of the scripts at interview. Concern was raised that differing practices across Colleges would not be ideal and would be difficult to communicate.

It was **agreed** that the Colleges should discuss this matter with Directors of Studies (DoSs) and feed back to the next meeting of the Admissions Forum.

- *Section 2 marks*

It was noted that applicants are likely to want to know their assessment marks and that the potential for Freedom of Information and Data Protection requests needs to be considered. The legal position on this will be considered by the Steering Group.

It was noted that marking is not a departmental matter, but rather a College matter, and it is important that this is clear. Marking of the scripts should be College managed, and it was noted that Colleges might usefully work collaboratively.

It was suggested that centralised marking and the cost implications could be considered for future years, but implementation will not be possible for this coming cycle.

Section 1 marks will be generated by the ATS and loaded into CamSIS. Section 2 marks will be generated by Colleges and entered into the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets.

It was **agreed** that the manner in which Section 2 results are dealt with would be referred to the Steering Group. If the results are needed for research purposes they will need to be retained.

16/73 REVIEW OF THE ROUND UPDATE

A paper providing an update on the actions arising from the Review of the Round was received for information (AF 16/04/3). The chair reported on progress on the actions arising.

The following matters were discussed:

vi) Communication of admissions decisions

It was noted that the resource implications of communicating decisions to applicants on the same day is too great this year, given the other changes already in place. College Admissions Offices are committed to doing this, and the Deputy Chair requested a definite commitment for the 2018 cycle. It was strongly **recommended** that Senior Tutors and Bursars ensure that College Admissions Offices are appropriately resourced to enable this to happen.

vii) Agreed posting date

It was **agreed** that the posting date for decisions will be Wednesday 11 January 2017 with no email communications sent before 9am on Thursday 12 January 2017.

16/74 ARRANGEMENTS FOR JOINT TRIPOSES

A paper was received for information (AF 16/04/4). The Director of Admissions reported on best practice of one interview per subject. It was **recommended** that if there is any College variation then Colleges should make this clear to applicants via their websites.

Application numbers are not known at this stage, but the History and Politics Tripos is likely to be very popular.

It was **agreed** that, in the first year, applicants should not be asked directly about willingness to be considered for a single Tripos, and that all interviewers should be aware of this, as to do so may give unintended signals about the applicant's performance. [Post meeting note: This matter will be revisited at the August meeting of the Admissions Forum, as previous discussion of this issue (19 February) saw offering a place on a single Tripos as being acceptable college practice. This means further work is required to find a method of ascertaining applicant willingness to accept such an offer, without compromising the interview process.]

The need for a composite list of all relevant subjects and pooled applicants at an appropriate stage of the cycle was noted. It was suggested that Subject Moderation Spreadsheets can be amalgamated at a later stage and in time for the Winter Pool.

16/75 VIDEO CONFERENCING WORKING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting of the Working Group on Video Conferencing and relevant papers were received for consideration (AF 16/04/5a,b,c,d,e). The Director of Admissions reported on the discussions of the meeting.

Concern was raised that there is currently disconnect between what Colleges say and do in relation to remote interviewing. It was **agreed** that it is essential that Colleges have a clear statement on their websites which reflects their practices in this regard. It was further **agreed** that a list of College practices be made available on the Study Cam website so that applicants can make an informed decision regarding the College to which they wish to apply.

Colleges were reminded that the video conferencing facilities within the university are now free to use. These facilities seem to offer a much better interviewing experience than using Skype from a desktop.

Mr Beard's proposal for remote interviewing of applicants in the USA was considered. It was proposed that a pilot is put in place this year, and that if successful, consideration be given to implementing it more systematically. It was stressed that this is not a Skype trial, but a video conferencing trial which has better functionality than Skype. The proposal was **agreed** in principal with any Colleges having a particular interest in the pilot or wishing to opt out being asked to contact Miss Reed.

16/76 IB OFFER LEVEL

A summary of recent offers on IB overall scores was received for information (AF 16/04/6). The Deputy Chair reported that stiffer offers are being made than the publicised typical offer. The range of 40-41 is no longer a realistic statement of Colleges' position; many offers are being made at 42 and this needs to be reflected in public facing information. It was **agreed** that the typical offer would be revised to a range of 40-42, with 776 at Higher Level, from the 2018 admissions cycle onwards. The importance of ensuring all presentations and other communications are updated was noted. It was also **agreed** that any Colleges planning to regularly offer at 42 in the 2017 admissions cycle should make this position clear on their website.

16/77 WELCOME TO CAMBRIDGE EVENTS

A briefing pack was received for information (AF 16/04/7). Mr Beard reported on the alumni-led pre-arrival events for new students. 'Welcome to Cambridge' have requested a greater level of support for their events. The general feeling was that it would be better to be involved in the running of these events than simply to let them proliferate without any input. It is important that the correct information is being given to new students and it was generally felt that greater involvement would be desirable. It was suggested that Schools Liaison Officers (SLOs) and/or current undergraduates could attend the events and collect feedback to help improve them in the future.

It was **recommended** that this matter be referred to the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC), proposing that Admissions Tutors and Senior Tutors work together, and that Colleges are more active in such alumni-led events for incoming students.

16/78 AREA LINKS

A paper was received for consideration (AF 16/04/8). The Director of Admissions reported on the progress of the agreed area links amnesty. The suggestion that

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough be taken out of the formal Area Links scheme with responsibility for this area being shared across Colleges that wish to participate, with a single point of contact in CAO to coordinate the 'Cambridge Connect' scheme, was **approved**. It was noted that offering a coherent scheme to schools and colleges in the local area is important to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), and to the schools and colleges themselves.

It was **agreed** that the new arrangements should take into account current College relationships with schools in these two areas, with conflicts of interest being considered carefully. It was **agreed** that Colleges would be consulted about the distribution of schools and colleges in these two areas, with the matter being brought back to the Admissions Forum in August with a more definite list of contacts and details of how the single point of contact will work.

It was noted that Corpus Christi needs to be added to the list of Colleges that wish to take on more areas.

Broader area links review recommendations were considered. Whilst North Yorkshire is very large geographically, St Catharine's is keen to take on the whole of the area as they are relinquishing another large area. It was **agreed** that they would trial this initially with the suggestion they share the area being reviewed at a later date.

It was noted that although Corpus Christi has large numbers of high attaining students in the Northern Irish grammar schools, these students mainly do not leave the area. Corpus Christi expressed a keen interest in sharing any area. It was **agreed** that Corpus Christi and Trinity would consult on taking on the areas of Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham.

All other suggested recommendations for the redistribution of areas were **approved**.

The possibility of a collaborative approach to working with new or existing HE+ schemes was raised. It was **agreed** that Colleges should directly contact the relevant College in the first instance, proposing arrangements for a joint scheme, before contacting Laura Anders at CAO for consideration by the Steering Group.

16/79 **VETERINARY MEDICINE ADMISSIONS**

A report and accompanying information were received for information (AF 16/04/09a,b,c,d). The Director of Admissions reported on the work of the Working Party on Admissions to Veterinary Medicine and the recommendations it had made, which included working on the public presentation of the nature of the Cambridge course, as well as revising the typical offer back down to one A* for 2018 entry, with the expectation that many applicants will achieve more highly than this.

It was noted that when the offer level increased to one A* there was an impact on application numbers and open day attendance, but Cambridge still attracted a good number of highly qualified applicants; this is no longer the case.

The Admission Forum in general expressed considerable sympathy with the situation of Veterinary Medicine but there were divergent views on how that situation should be addressed. The straw poll showed that there was a majority in favour of NOT lowering the offer, though subsequent comment revealed that this reluctance to lower the offer was, for some, linked to there being a shared tripos for Medics and Vets, and that this situation needed addressing first. The Admissions Forum suggested that the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC) and the Undergraduate Admissions Committee (UAC) may wish to examine this issue further as there were matters involved not strictly to do with admissions.

16/80 PRE-MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

The Director of Admissions reported that the pre-medical requirements, as Colleges know them, no longer exist and have been replaced by 'matriculation requirements'. It was noted that matriculation requirements are part of a wider review, given the forthcoming qualification reforms.

16/81 WINTER POOL WORKING PARTY

The Deputy Chair reported on the relative opaqueness of the Winter Pool operations. This is not likely to improve with the lack of UMS causing additional difficulties in this area. It is important that the process is reviewed to ensure Colleges are confident that they are making robust decisions. It was **agreed** that Miss Reed will circulate the request for volunteers for the Winter Pool Working Party and ask for issues they feel need to be discussed.

16/82 LIBERAL ARTS FOUNDATION COURSE WORKING PARTY

A report was received for information (AF 16/04/10). The Director of Admissions reported on two meetings of the Working Party. The general feeling was that there is some potential for a foundation course, not just for mature applicants, but also for those applying to standard age Colleges.

It was reported that a meeting had been held with Dr Gazzard, the new head of the Institute for Continuing Education (ICE), during which the possibility of an ICE-funded three month internship to explore this further had been discussed.

There was no firm commitment at this stage, but it was **agreed** that this is an interesting possibility deserving of further exploration, and the offer of the internship would be pursued.

16/83 TEACHER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May and a discussion paper on Regional Teachers' Events were received for information (AF 16/04/11a,b). The Chair reported on the group's discussions and it was **agreed** that the Admissions Forum would support the exploration of the reintroduction of regional teachers' events.

16/84 ADMISSIONS SELECTION TRAINING

A report from Dr Tait was received for information (AF 16/04/12). The Chair requested host Colleges, preferably those who have not yet volunteered. It was **agreed** that Miss Reed would circulate the request along with a list of obligations host Colleges need to fulfil.

16/85 MEDIA UPDATE

A report from Dr Almeroth-Williams was received for information (AF 16/04/13). Dr Almeroth-Williams reported on preparedness for possible enquiries on sample assessment papers, noting that these will not be proactively announced but that journalists are likely to be interested.

The Office of Communications has responded on behalf of the Director of Admissions and the Colleges to an enquiry from SunDog TV Production Company. There is no interest in pursuing this further at this stage and Dr Almeroth-Williams has requested further information.

Dr Almeroth-Williams reported on a Freedom of Information request response having recently been sent to a politician relating to admissions across all Colleges over a 5 year period, focusing on POLAR3 and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) applications.

16/86 CAMBRIDGE BURSARY SCHEME

Minutes of the Cambridge Bursary Scheme Sub Group held on 6 May were received for information (AF 16/04/14). Dr Fara reported any bursary payments to students with an assessed household income over c. £42,000 cannot be included in the OFFA return.

It was noted that the updated protocol for advertising College bursaries was never ratified by the Senior Tutors' Committee or the Colleges' Committee. There was appetite within the Admissions Forum to revisit this protocol.

16/87 APPLICATIONS AND OFFERS IN THE CURRENT ROUND

An analysis of applications and offers in the current round was received for information (AF 16/04/15). The Director of Admissions reported on the current figures and asked Colleges to be mindful of OFFA targets during the forthcoming confirmation period. It was noted that the attrition rate of offer holders from POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2 is higher than that of their peers.

16/88 ANNUAL ADMISSIONS STATISTICS

It was noted that the 2015 Annual Admissions Statistics were published on 27 May and are available here: <http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/statistics>. It was noted that any comments should be sent directly to Miss Reed.

16/89 PUBLICATION OF UCAS EQUALITY DATA

Embargoed data, due to be published by UCAS on 9 June, was received for information along with guides to the reports (AF 16/04/16a,b,c). The Director of Admissions reported on the publication of this data. It was noted that Dr Horner (Research Officer in CAO) has completed a thorough analysis of this data in anticipation of any enquiries.

UCAS will be holding a press conference to help journalists understand what the data means, as it is complex. There is a considerable risk that this data may be misunderstood. The data is based on predicted grades which are unreliable.

Dr Almeroth-Williams has prepared statements in readiness for enquiries from journalists.

Any enquiries directed to individual Colleges should be referred to the Office of Communications.

16/90 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS

A summary of FOI requests recently serviced by CAO was received for information (AF 16/04/17).

16/91 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Admissions Research Steering Group held on 20 April 2016* (AF 16/04/18)
Attention was drawn to minute 6. The Chair reported on the proposal to bring the Admissions Research Working Party into the Admissions Research Steering Group to form a single body. This will save a lot of time and effort given the current level of overlap between the two. This proposal was **agreed**.
- ii) *Outreach Steering Group held on 21 April 2016* (AF 16/04/19)
- iii) *Information and Publications Sub Group held on 27 April 2016* (AF 16/04/20)
- iv) *Music Awards Working Group held on 27 April 2016* (AF 16/04/21)

- v) *Mature Student Strategy Group held on 29 April 2016* (AF 16/04/22)
- vi) *CAO Management Group held on 10 May 2016* (AF 16/04/23)
- vii) *CamSIS Special Interest Group held on 12 May 2016* (AF 16/04/24)
- viii) *Schools Liaison Officers' Group held on 12 May 2016* (AF 16/04/25a,b)
Amended terms of reference were also received and **approved**.

Attention was drawn to minute 16.19. Dr Dickers reminded Admissions Tutors of the resources available to newly appointed Schools Liaison Officers (SLOs), such as Moodle and HELOA, and advised them to make contact with Ms Bond in CAO to ensure communications were not missed.

It was noted that Dr Dickers will be leaving Cambridge in August, and therefore a new Chair will be needed for this group. Volunteers were asked to contact Miss Reed directly.

- ix) *Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 16 May 2016* (AF 16/04/26)
- x) *Outreach Steering Group held on 19 May 2016* (AF 16/04/27a,b,c)
Papers on Target Oxbridge and Schools Plus programmes were also received for information. Attention was drawn to minutes 15.52 and 15.55a. The Director of Admissions reported that no central funding is available for these programmes, but if Colleges wish to collaborate on this then they are free to do so. Colleges were encouraged to support the Target Oxbridge scheme if possible as it could make a big difference in terms of the number of Black students applying to Cambridge. It was noted that Oxford are engaging with this in a very committed way.

16/92 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- i) *Raw marks*
The collection of raw marks for reformed AS/A Levels and whether applicants will have access to these was discussed and Miss Reed is currently seeking clarification on this from OFQUAL. It was **agreed** that should applicants ask about this at the forthcoming Open Days they should be advised that no decision has yet been taken.
- ii) *CUSU Access Officer*
The Chair reported that this would be the last meeting for Miss Blair, outgoing CUSU Access Officer. Miss Blair was thanked sincerely for her contributions to the Admissions Forum and wished every success for the future.

16/93 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 17 August 2016 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2016/17 have been agreed as:

Friday 14 October 2016
 Friday 18 November 2016
 Friday 20 January 2017
 Friday 24 February 2017
 Friday 21 April 2017
 Friday 2 June 2017
 Wednesday 16 August 2017

Confidential

Confirmed

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

CAO/05.06.16

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Wednesday 17 August 2016** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, CHR), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions, N), Dr P Wingfield (CAI), Dr S Boss (CHU), Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr J Padley (CHU), Professor J Goodman (CL), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr D Bainbridge (CTH), Dr M Correia (DOW), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Cole (ED), Dr R Henderson (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Davis (G), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr C Roughley (HH), Dr M Steinfeld (HH), Dr B Post (JE), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr H Watson (JN), Dr F Hernandez (K), Dr E Tomlinson (LC), Dr S Martin (M), Dr J Munns (M), Dr H Bateman (MUR), Dr W Galloway (PEM), Dr M Wormald (PEM), Mr S Mandelbrote (PET), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr S Connell (SE), Dr S Eves (SE), Dr K Dickens (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr I McNeill (TH), Dr A Murray (TH), Dr L MacVinish (W) with Dr P Fara (Senior Tutors' Committee), Ms E Attridge (CUSU), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Miss V Mills (Admissions Secretaries and Officers' Group), Mr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group), Mr J Beard (CAO), Mr T Levinson (CAO), Miss A Eagling (Administrative Secretary, CAO), Miss R Lister (CAO) and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

In attendance: Dr D Holburn (CAI).

16/94 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr M Gemelos (ED) and Dr M Hrebeniak (W).

The Chair welcomed Dr Corinne Roughley (HH), Dr Martin Steinfeld (HH), Dr D Holburn (Senior Tutors' Committee representative from Michaelmas term) and Ms E Attridge (CUSU Access Officer) to their first meeting.

16/95 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 June were approved as an accurate record (AF 16/05/1).

16/96 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved with the exception of items 27 i), 27 iii), and 27 x).

16/97 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

16/98 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA*i) Veterinary Medicine Admissions (minute 16/79)*

The Director of Admissions reported that the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC) had considered the issue of Veterinary Medicine admissions at length and had reached the same conclusions as Admissions Forum; STC was in agreement that decoupling the Tripos would make it possible for the offer level to be reconsidered. It was noted that there was an extensive minute from the STC which reflected broader issues such as marketing the Tripos, as well as the offer level.

ii) Arrangements for Joint Triposes (minute 16/74)

The Chair reported that discussion of this item would be covered within item 8 (minute 16/101) on the Working Party on the Winter Pool.

iii) Area Links Scheme (minute 16/78)

The Director of Admissions reported that an email had been sent to all Admissions Tutors and Schools Liaison Officers on 22 July, outlining the Connect to Cambridge scheme.

Those Colleges which had responded expressing an interest in being involved with the scheme during the 2016-17 academic year were thanked. Any Colleges yet to respond, but who would like to be involved, were asked to email the Director of Admissions by 31 August. Further information will be circulated in September.

The Director of Admissions will consult with St Catharine's, which has many links with the schools/colleges concerned, when making the allocation to Colleges.

iv) Raw Marks (minute 16/92i)

Miss Reed reported that OFQUAL had confirmed in June that two of the four English Awarding Bodies would be providing raw marks for reformed AS/A Levels to schools/candidates. It was anticipated that the other two awarding bodies would follow suit. OFQUAL is yet to confirm whether grade boundaries will be available, but it is expected that this will be the case.

It was noted that clear confirmation would be needed on how to advise applicants to complete the Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ) to ensure that they do not enter raw marks as if they were UMS.

16/99 PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION WITH REGARD TO A LEVEL DECISION-MAKING AND THE SUMMER POOL

i) OFFA Targets

The Director of Admissions gave an update on the current position relative to both the Maintained Sector and Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN) targets. It was noted that figures were below target for both state sector and POLAR3 Quintiles 1 and 2, as well as for OAC which, although not part of this year's target, will be one of the OFFA targets next year. It was anticipated that these figures would change as outstanding decisions were processed by Colleges. Colleges were reminded that both the maintained and LPN targets should be taken into consideration when making final decisions in the coming days.

Mr Beard reported that the LPN target had been missed last year, and that this would be reported to OFFA in January 2017. It was noted that good progress would need to be made this year, ensuring the targets are met. Should either target be missed again this year then the situation would be compounded.

ii) Numbers-managed subjects

The Director of Admissions gave an update on the current situation with regard to numbers managed subjects.

Both Architecture and History of Art were already close to the agreed target figures and the number of outstanding decisions was such that an overshoot could be possible. The Director of Admissions therefore reported that it was not possible, prior to the Summer Pool, to reprieve near-miss applicants in these two subjects.

An overshoot was not possible in Music or Philosophy and therefore Colleges could reprieve near-miss applicants in these subjects.

As usual, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine numbers would be managed through the established processes. It was noted that Veterinary Medicine could not go over the planned number, and potentially numbers would be significantly under plan. The Medicine meeting would be taking place this afternoon at 4.30pm, after which an update would be issued by Dr Henderson.

iii) Numbers in Physical Natural Sciences and Linguistics

The Director of Admissions reported that numbers for Physical Natural Sciences were such that Colleges could reprieve near-miss applicants.

Linguistics had already gone over target and therefore near-miss applicants Colleges wished to reprieve would need close scrutiny. Colleges were advised to consult with the Linguistics Subject Convenor and the Director of Admissions in such cases.

iv) Summer Pool position and Pooling Criteria

Full details of the Summer Pool and compulsory pooling criteria had already been circulated and were reconfirmed by the Chair. It was noted that additional information on Mathematics had been circulated by the Mathematics Subject Convenor.

v) Communicating with Summer Pool applicants

The Director of Admissions reported on concerns from applicants regarding the timing of the Summer Pool and missing opportunities in Clearing. It was **recommended** that Colleges consider giving applicants the choice of whether or not they wish to go into the Pool in situations where they had missed their insurance choice or had no insurance choice. Where applicants had met the conditions of their insurance choice they would not be jeopardised by being placed in the Summer Pool.

vi) Summer Pool File Stickers

The Director of Admissions reported on the previous sticker position on the Summer Pool files. OFFA countable applicants had previously been flagged regardless of school type. It was **agreed** that a different colour sticker would be used for OFFA countable applicants from the maintained sector.

Whilst it was noted that OAC was not a target for this current cycle, it was **agreed** that OAC applicants should be flagged with a sticker.

vii) Re-marks

Colleges were reminded that re-marks would come in quickly over the coming days/weeks. If an applicant meets the conditions of their offer on or before 31 August then the offer has to be honoured. After that point it will be at the discretion of the Colleges.

Colleges were reminded of the need to process decisions based on the information they have available, and not to delay where an applicant is requesting a re-mark. Should applicants meet offer conditions after a re-mark they can be retrieved from their insurance choice as appropriate.

Miss Reed reported on changes to re-marks and appeals. It was **agreed** that Miss Reed would circulate the information on re-marks from OFQUAL. Concern was expressed following communications from teachers who were under the impression the policy had changed from re-marking to recounting. It was **agreed** that Miss Reed would investigate the possible change in policy.

Colleges were reminded that, should an applicant receive a re-mark following a change of College through the Summer Pool, the two Colleges concerned would need to negotiate to reach agreement on where the applicant should be placed.

viii) College Position Post-Confirmation

A discussion took place in which Colleges shared information on their current position with regard to admissions and strong near-miss applicants they were planning on placing in the Summer Pool.

ix) Media Handling

Dr Almeroth-Williams reminded Colleges of his contact details:

Email: news@admin.cam.ac.uk

Telephone: 01223 766762

Mobile: 07540139444

Colleges were encouraged to contact Dr Almeroth-Williams at any point should problems occur and were advised that he would also consult with the Director of Admissions.

x) Summer Pool Venue

It was noted that the Summer Pool will take place in Lucia Windsor Room, Newnham College between 11am and 4pm on Friday 19 August.

xi) Adjustment and Clearing Applications

It was noted that Cambridge does not take part in either of these UCAS schemes. The only option available to highly qualified applicants who are not already holding an offer with a College is to make an application for 2017 entry.

xii) Any other matters

There were no other matters to discuss.

16/100 ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENTS UPDATE

The Director of Admissions summarised progress on the arrangements for the forthcoming admissions assessments.

i) Issues log

The assessment issues log was received for information (AF 16/05/2a). The Director of Admissions reported on the outstanding items. It was noted that the Service Level Agreement had reverted to a legal agreement between the University and the Office for Intercollegiate Services (OIS). As Cambridge Assessment and CAO are part of the same organisation they cannot enter into a legal agreement. It was noted that there would be a Memorandum of Understanding between Cambridge Assessment and CAO.

ii) Collective marking arrangements for Section 2

The Director of Admissions confirmed that marking of Section 2 pre-interview assessments would be a College responsibility. Colleges may collaborate or outsource marking should they wish, however Colleges would have to cover any costs incurred.

iii) Use of Section 2 scripts at interview

Differing views were expressed regarding the use of Section 2 scripts at interview. It was **agreed** that the use of Section 2 scripts at interview would be permissible on condition that applicants are made aware that this may happen. In such cases the College will provide the applicant with a copy of their script at least one hour before their interview.

Due to the timing of at-interview assessments, applicants may not have a script available to be used at interview and therefore these Section 2s would need to be dealt with differently.

It was noted that some Colleges would retain written work requirements until they know whether or not the new assessments can be used as a replacement.

iv) Rasch Analysis

The Director of Admissions reported that Rasch analysis would be used for the modelling of marks for Section 1 and that she would circulate further information regarding the parameters to be used. Admissions Tutors would receive raw marks and distributions alongside the 1 to 9 scale. It was noted that this scale would not be the same as that used for the BMAT, with applicants more likely to achieve top marks, but a broader mark range used for the middle part of the field.

v) Pre and at-interview arrangements

Details of the pre and at-interview arrangements were received for information (AF 16/05/2b,c). The Director of Admissions summarised these and confirmed that no further changes were expected and that the timetable could therefore be finalised.

History of Art had suggested it would be easier for University Teaching Officers (UTOs) to interview centrally in the department as is currently done in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Although not ideal, there were no strong objections, and the suggestion was therefore **approved**.

The suggestion that Linguistics offer centralised marking to those Colleges who wished to opt in and pay for such a service was **approved**.

It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would request further information regarding the arrangements for centralised marking of the Computer Science at-interview assessment.

vi) Admissions Assessments Steering Group

Minutes of the June and July meetings of the Admissions Assessments Steering Group were received for information (AF 16/05/2d,e). Attention was drawn to minute 5 (5) of the June meeting regarding the arrangements for the at-interview Computer Science assessment. Consideration should be given to whether this could be a pre-interview assessment next year. It was **recommended** that the date the applicant had taken the assessment should be made available at the Winter Pool and it was suggested that this information could be included on the Winter Pool Coversheet. *[A post Admissions Forum suggestion that the information might be added to the Subject Moderation Spreadsheet will be further explored.]*

It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would discuss this matter further with Computer Science.

vii) Protocol for those unable to access a test centre

It was noted that the draft proposal would first be circulated to the Admissions Assessment Steering Group with an agreed version then being circulated more widely as soon as possible.

Concerns were raised regarding overseas applicants incurring significant expenses to access open test centres. It was noted that there will be some flexibility in the first year and that it would be important to treat applicants in a similar way. For those applicants unable to attend an interview in December, at-interview assessments would be made available in January.

viii) Protocol for those who failed to register on time for a pre-interview assessment

It was noted that the draft proposal would first be circulated to the Steering Group with an agreed version then being circulated more widely as soon as possible.

An Admissions Tutor representative was requested, with Admissions Tutors wishing to volunteer for the Assessments Steering Group being asked to contact the Director of Admissions directly.

16/101 WORKING PARTY ON THE WINTER POOL

Minutes of a meeting held on 3 August were received for information (AF 16/05/3). The Deputy Chair summarised the work of the Working Party and the following recommendations were all **approved**:

2. Pooling Criteria and Agreed Policy on the Pool

- That the final sentence of paragraph 6 should be amended to read: 'Those with less than 8 can be pooled at your discretion.';
- That the 'Mature applicant' section of the Pooling criteria be reviewed and updated by Dr Tomlinson;
- That paragraph 7 of the Agreed Policy on the Pool be removed and that this information is instead communicated separately from the Winter Pool documentation;
- That paragraph 8 of the Agreed Policy on the Pool be amended to read:

'The needs for the four Mature Colleges with regards to the Winter Pool are somewhat different to those of the other Colleges, and, while the numbers of mature applicants to "standard age" Colleges remain low, Colleges should consult with their link Mature College regarding which mature applicants to place in the Winter Pool'.

3. *Pooling applicants with tags*

That a controlled dummy pilot run of the process be conducted in two subjects (one small and one large) for 2018 entry, in order to establish a better understanding of how the process would work and the effect the change could have on the final outcome of the Winter Pool.

4. *Winter Pool Coversheet*

- That School type be added alongside School/College name, ideally in time for 2017 entry;
- That if possible POLAR 3 and OAC flagging information should be added to the Coversheet when generated in CamSIS;
- That Colleges who tick the 'Application needs reassessment' box, should also have to indicate this on the WP2 form, to allow CAO to track the progress of these applicants through the Winter Pool;
- That the requirement to indicate any Part II Tripos variation be removed.

5. *Security at the Winter Pool*

- That all those attending the Winter Pool be asked to display their University card at all times for identification purposes and CAO would provide lanyards to assist with this;
- That the Winter Pool host College be asked to provide a dedicated Porter to assist CAO in monitoring those attending the Winter Pool;
- That anyone who fails to display their University Card would be politely requested to do so, and if they refuse, would be asked to leave the Winter Pool by the dedicated Porter. *It was further **agreed** that Admissions Tutor support would be expected with those who are likely to take unkindly to this security arrangement, with mobile contacts of Admissions Tutors or nominees being provided for this purpose;*
- That in advance of the Winter Pool Colleges provide CAO with a list of College representatives they expect to be in attendance.

7. *Online and paper information*

- It was stressed that the CAO master lists, not the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets, should be the basis on which Colleges/Subject Convenors track applicants through the Winter Pool and it was recommended that Subject Convenors be tasked with comparing the two documents to identify any discrepancies;
- That CAO produce a Winter Pool best practice guide to be circulated in advance and displayed at the Winter Pool, so all those present were aware of the correct Pool etiquette;
- That Admissions Tutors should actively help to ensure that those present at the Winter Pool were following the advice given;
- That, should an Admissions Tutor be unavailable during the Winter Pool, then they should nominate a representative to act on their behalf and be a point of contact for any queries that arise.

8. *Poolside Meeting Protocol*

- That paragraph 'f' be amended to read:
'The processes of formally selecting applicants for offer (O) or interview (I) will operate in rounds. In subjects that admit under an average of 65 students over a three year period the order in which Colleges select in each round will be determined randomly; in all other subjects (including

Veterinary Medicine), when considering applications for direct entry, the order will be determined on the basis of need.';

- That the final sentence of paragraph 'l' be amended to read:
'In subjects admitting fewer than an average of 65 students over a three year period (excluding Veterinary Medicine) there are no double picks on the basis of gender.';
- That the following sentence of paragraph 'm' be amended to read:
'In subjects admitting under an average of 65 students over a three year period (excluding Veterinary Medicine) (i.e. where the order of picking is determined randomly) the Mature Colleges will, with the exception of applicants pooled by one of the other three Mature Colleges (see above), be part of the standard process for determining the picking order as laid out in f) and g) above; in all other subjects, when considering applications for direct entry, the order will be determined on the basis of need.';
- That the following sentence is added to paragraph 'o':
'Normally this should be a ratio of 2:1.';
- There was some discussion regarding whether College picking order should be recalculated at the start of each round. It was felt that this should remain at the discretion of the Subject Convenor and it was agreed to recommend that the excel spreadsheet created by Dr Parks be circulated to all Subject Convenors to assist with the recalculation;
- That a paragraph be added to the poolside Meeting Protocol to reflect that Colleges should be permitted to go over quota in exceptional circumstances. *It was further **agreed** that clear guidance needs to be included in the Pool paperwork to state that authority on these decisions lies with the Subject Convenor and the Director of Admissions. Decisions should be taken in the best interests of candidates, rather than considering the best interests of the subject;*
- That informal quotas within subjects should not be applied, with the exception of arrangements for numbers-managed subjects.

9. Joint Triposes

- That the tags on all pooled applicants lapse at 4pm on the second day of the Winter Pool to allow for the Joint Tripos poolside meetings to take place at 4.30pm and 5.15pm;
- That the relevant Single Tripos poolside meetings (i.e. MML, History and HSPS) take place at the end of the third day of the Winter Pool;
- That the preference College of an applicant pooled for one of the Joint Triposes but not picked out for an offer be given the opportunity to make an offer for the Single Tripos in advance of the Single Tripos poolside Meeting, providing they have indicated this preference on the file in advance of the Winter Pool. These tags would lapse at an agreed point during the morning of the third day of the Winter Pool. [Post Meeting Note: it has been suggested that a mark of 'D' (double-tagging) should be used and that this mark should lapse at 11am on the third day (so any preference College would have to retrieve for a single Tripos offer by that point)]. *It was further **agreed** that the College needs to indicate which single Tripos they wish to make an offer for, as presumably if an applicant is not being offered for the joint Tripos then they will have performed better in one of the two subjects. History would be given priority in the Pool meetings, followed by HSPS and MML who would not be vying for the same applicants. Applicants would not be asked if they wished to be considered for the single Tripos this year.*

10. Subject Convenors

- That Subject Convenors be responsible for promoting those applicants who it appears may not receive an offer but were most worthy;
- That Subject Convenors are encouraged to liaise directly with a representative from the Mature Colleges regarding Mature applicants;

- That Dr Tomlinson act as the Mature College representative and point of contact for Subject Convenors.

11. Open Offers for flagged applicants

- That a pilot scheme be introduced for 2017 entry, with a small number of Colleges who would be willing to underwrite any open offers made;
- That a panel be convened to review and select which applicants should be made an open offer as soon as possible following the Winter Pool. The panel should include, as a minimum, the Director of Admissions and the relevant Subject Convenor;
- That priority be given to those applicants with both a POLAR3 and an OAC flag, followed by those with either one or the other;
- That a review of those applicants entered into the 2016 Pool be undertaken to determine possible numbers. *It was further **agreed** that a briefing should be drawn up explaining how the process will work, as well as the likely numbers involved. Clear guidance should be provided on who will decide on whether or not near-miss open offer applicants are placed in the Summer Pool.*

16/102 USA REMOTE INTERVIEWING PILOT

A paper was received for consideration (AF 16/05/4). The Director of Admissions thanked Mr Avery for his work on the proposal and summarised its contents.

Concern was raised over the logistics of booking interview slots and it was **agreed** that Mr Avery would be asked to investigate this further.

It was confirmed that Colleges could return for re-allocation any open applicant who may wish to be interviewed remotely where the College in question is not participating in the remote interviewing pilot.

Concern was raised over the possible recording of remote interviews, however it was noted that a number of interviews were already recorded without problems having arisen, and that this should therefore not be problematic.

It was noted that the International Admissions and Recruitment Working Group felt very positively about this pilot.

The proposal to go ahead with the pilot during Michaelmas Term 2016 was **approved** and it was noted that a list of Colleges interested in taking part would be required.

16/103 WORKING PARTY ON INTERVIEWEE TRAVEL COSTS

Minutes of a meeting held on 6 June were received for information (AF 16/05/5). The Director of Admissions reported on the recommendations of the meeting with regard to establishing a more formal reimbursement scheme for the 2017/18 admissions round.

The group had recommended that receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) during the last six years and/or being currently in care should be the sole criteria for reimbursements, with a recommendation that Colleges also be open to assessing on a case-by-case basis, as currently happens.

It was **agreed** that this scheme should be investigated further, as outlined in the paper, by the Director of Admissions in consultation with a group that includes Bursars.

16/104 WRITTEN WORK DEADLINE

The Director of Admissions reported that, in consultation with the Admissions Administrators, it had been proposed that the deadline for written work be moved to Thursday 3 November for 2016. Those Colleges which only request written work from

applicants invited to interview could continue to set their own deadlines. This proposal was **approved**.

16/105 FEEDBACK COLLECTED FROM APPLICANTS IN THE UPCOMING ADMISSIONS ROUND

The chair reported on a suggestion arising from the Admissions Administrators' Group to request feedback from applicants regarding how they felt the application process had been administered in light of the changes being implemented. Feedback could be sought after the interview period but before decisions are communicated, with responses being anonymous. It was noted that this feedback exercise is conducted at Peterhouse and the response rate has always been high.

It was **recommended** that Colleges consider requesting feedback in this way, but it would not be a requirement to do so.

16/106 ORGAN TRIALS

The Director of Admissions reported on arrangements regarding the forthcoming Organ Trials.

i) Marking of Admissions Assessments

All candidates (except those applicants to Medicine/Veterinary Medicine) will be asked to complete an at-interview assessment at 9am on the Monday morning of the interview period. Papers will need to be arranged swiftly once applications have been received and numbers are known for each subject.

ii) Interviewers

The Director of Admissions thanked those who had come forward to volunteer for the second subject interviews. Additional volunteers for 19 and 20 September would be welcome and should contact the Director of Admissions as soon as possible.

16/107 QUALIFICATIONS VERIFICATION

The Director of Admissions reported on the importance of Colleges undertaking the necessary checks to satisfy themselves that the qualifications applicants claim they have are accurate. Results sent to us by UCAS are already verified, but qualifications such as GCSEs declared at the point of the UCAS application are not. College practices vary, with some Colleges asking for evidence at interview and others asking for certificates to be posted. The Director of Admissions stressed the importance of Colleges undertaking verification at some point in the process.

16/108 UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Updated Terms of Reference were received for information (AF 16/05/06). The Chair reported on the Senior Tutor appointments: Dr Sandra Fulton (G, Chair) and Dr Juliet Foster (MUR) from 1 October 2016 until 30 September 2019.

Dr Andrew Thompson will have served three years by Michaelmas 2016 and is willing to renew this for a further three years. Dr Helen Watson has served four years and is willing to continue for a further two years. Extensions to the tenure of both Admissions Tutors on this panel were **approved**.

16/109 CAMBRIDGE COLLEGES' PHYSICS EXPERIENCE (CCPE)

A paper from Dr Jardine-Wright was received for information (AF 16/05/07). The Director of Admissions summarised changes from the current ad hoc process to one where there would be set dates and times for schools to sign up to, and for Colleges to sign up to be involved with. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough schools would be allocated randomly to the Colleges based on matching the days offered and requested, with schools outside this region continuing to be invited and booked by the Schools Liaison Officers of the Area Link College. It was noted that CCPE would be flexible regarding the allocation of schools and

that they are aware of the new Connect to Cambridge scheme which will change the way in which Colleges and schools in the region are connected.

16/110 i-want-to-study-engineering.org

The Director of Admissions reported on the usual request to alert Engineering and Chemical Engineering applicants to this resource after the open allocation and before decisions about interview shortlists.

The usual form of words is:

"Dear Engineering (and Chemical Engineering) applicants,

Many universities have engineering admissions tests and interviews that involve solving problems. If you want to practise solving problems relevant to engineering, please visit: <http://i-want-to-study-engineering.org>"

16/111 CORE MATHS BRIEFING

The Director of Admissions reported that a useful briefing on Core Maths took place last month. Discussion on Core Maths, along with the Extended Project Qualification, will be brought to the October meeting of Admissions Forum.

16/112 SCHOOLS LIAISON OFFICERS' GROUP CHAIR

The Chair reported that Dr Spencer had volunteered to be the Chair of the Schools Liaison Officers' Group from the start of Michaelmas term 2016. This appointment was **approved**.

16/113 TIER IV UPDATE

A paper was received for information (AF 16/05/8). Miss Reed highlighted the following on behalf of the International Student Team (IST):

1.2 Completion of current course

In order to be eligible to apply to extend a student visa in the UK to undertake a new course, a student must have successfully completed the course for which they were previously granted leave under Tier 4. This has implications for students who are initially granted a visa for a four year integrated Masters but graduate with a BA and then wish to undertake further study on a different course. As they have not completed the course for which the previous visa was granted, students would need to make the visa application for the new course from outside the UK.

2.2 Deposit payments

The following principles were previously agreed between the University and Colleges soon after the Tier 4 system was introduced:

- a) IST should be consulted before any deposit is sought or accepted from a student requiring a Tier 4 visa. This is in order to ensure this is reflected on the visa supporting documentation (CAS) issued by the University.
- b) Except when deposits are registered with IST in this way, no deposit should be sought by the College until a visa has been issued.

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that students are able to meet the specific financial documentation requirements for a Tier 4 visa application before funds go out of their account through transfer to the UK.

2.3 Approving financial documentation

IST has recently received a small number of queries from undergraduate students starting in Michaelmas term asking if the documentation approved by their College as evidence of funding can be used to support their visa application. Students are provided with detailed guidance on applying for a Tier 4 student visa but it would be helpful, where possible, if a reminder could be provided when accepting

evidence as proof of funding that these documents are unlikely to fulfil the specific requirements for a visa application. IST can provide suitable wording for this as appropriate.

16/114 IMPLICATIONS OF BREXIT

The Director of Admissions reported that the current statement on the University website is as permissive as it can be at this time until further information and clarification is provided by Universities UK (UUK) and the Government.

The importance of Colleges adhering to the agreed position was stressed.

It was noted that Trinity College was also looking into the legal position in the interest of all Colleges in order to maintain a steady stream of excellent EU applicants to Cambridge. Trinity College agreed to share any legal advice received in relation to this matter.

It was noted that the International Admissions and Recruitment Working Group would be holding further meetings next term to discuss the implications of Brexit. It was **agreed** that the position of the University of Oxford should be checked.

Concerns were raised regarding EU bursaries and ensuring that those who are accepted are not discouraged from arriving this October.

It was **agreed** that if Colleges have evidence of applicants not coming this year due to Brexit that they should inform the Director of Admissions. It was noted that CAO would continue to monitor closely the situation in relation to application and admissions figures.

16/115 MEDIA UPDATE

A report from Dr Almeroth-Williams was received for information (AF 16/05/9). Dr Almeroth-Williams reported on recent and upcoming media coverage, including a story on admissions assessments and sample papers which is being written for a Sunday paper and a BBC story on an applicant from Stoke. A number of enquiries had been received regarding Brexit.

It was **agreed** that Colleges would keep Dr Almeroth-Williams updated on any applicants who reject offers due to Brexit.

Dr Almeroth-Williams reported he had been proactively seeking regional press coverage of A Level good news stories for results day and had been in touch with 45 state schools. At least 15 success stories would be released tomorrow. It was hoped that this would continue on an annual basis should this year prove to be successful.

16/116 SMALL SUBJECT INTERVIEW DATES 2016

The small subject interview dates for the 2017 cycle were received for information (AF 16/05/10).

16/117 SUBJECT CONVENORS FOR 2016/17

Details of the 2016/17 Subject Convenors were received for information (AF 16/05/11).

16/118 ANNUAL ADMISSIONS BRIEFING & NEW ADMISSIONS TUTOR TRAINING

The 2016 Briefing will be held on 30 September at Magdalene College. The new Admissions Tutor training will take place on the morning of 29 September at Magdalene College.

The Director of Admissions reported on the slight change to the format.

16/119 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS

A summary of FOI requests recently serviced by CAO was received for information (AF 16/05/12).

16/120 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Admissions Directors of Studies in Engineering held on 21 April 2016* (AF 16/05/13)
Attention was drawn to minute 16.09 which states:
‘GTP noted that, as Paper 1 was designed to inform de-selection decisions while Paper 2 was designed, in part, to inform selection decisions...’
The Director of Admissions reported that this is not an agreed position.
- ii) *Colleges’ Outreach Monitoring Group held on 27 May 2016* (AF 16/05/14)
- iii) *Admissions Administrators’ Group (and updated Terms of Reference) held on 16 June 2016* (AF 16/05/15a,b)
- iv) *International Admissions and Recruitment Working Group held on 17 June 2016* (AF 16/05/16)
- v) *Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 20 June 2016* (AF 16/05/17)
- vi) *Admissions Directors of Studies in Engineering held on 27 June 2016* (AF 16/05/18)
Attention was drawn to minute 16.16. The Chair reported that the Engineering DoSs had asked Admissions Forum to review again the compulsory pooling criteria due to concerns about the large number of files in the Winter Pool, and in particular the low threshold represented by the compulsory pooling criteria for Scottish applicants.

The Chair reported that due to there being fewer compulsory pooled applicants this coming year, and the small numbers of Scottish applicants, this should not be reviewed until next year.

Attention was also drawn to minute 16.17 which states:
‘...de-selection decisions for such applicants [beyond the EU] may well have to be made in advance of the receipt of PEAA results...’
The Chair reported that this is not the case, and no deselection decisions may be made before 14 November, for candidates taking pre-interview assessments.
- vii) *Extraordinary Meeting of the International Admissions and Recruitment Working Group held on 8 July 2016* (AF 16/05/19)
- viii) *Admissions Research Steering Group held on 11 July 2016* (AF 16/05/20)
Attention was drawn to minute 3. Miss Reed reported that the group was looking to recruit an Admissions Tutor with statistical experience, ideally a statistician. Miss Reed further reminded Colleges that there would be no ranking at all on the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets for the forthcoming admissions round.
- ix) *CamSIS Special Interest Group held on 14 July 2016* (AF 16/05/21)
- x) *Overseas Qualifications Reference Group held on 18 July 2016* (AF 16/05/22)
Attention was drawn to minute 3 – USA SAT Reform. The Chair alerted Colleges to changes to the SAT grading and that this may affect a small number of their offer holders in the current cycle.

16/121 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair noted that a number of Admissions Tutors would be leaving their posts at the end of the current round. The Chair also noted that Dr Fara would be leaving her role of Senior Tutor’s Committee representative.

On behalf of the Admissions Forum all were thanked sincerely for their significant contributions to the undergraduate admissions process.

16/122 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 14 October 2016 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2016/17 have been agreed as:

Friday 18 November 2016

Friday 20 January 2017

Friday 24 February 2017

Friday 21 April 2017

Friday 2 June 2017

Wednesday 16 August 2017

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

CAO/24.08.16

University of Cambridge**ADMISSIONS FORUM**

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 14 October 2016** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, MUR), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions, N), Dr A Bond (CAI), Dr S Houghton-Walker (CAI), Dr P Wingfield (CAI), Dr E Tomlinson (CHR), Dr A Barbrook (CHU), Dr S Boss (CHU), Professor H Griffiths (CL), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr M Griffin (CTH), Dr M Correia (DOW), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Gemelos (ED), Dr C Russell (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr S Davis (G), Dr J Riley (G), Dr C Roughley (HH), Dr M Steinfeld (HH), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr B Post (JE), Dr V Harvey (LC), Dr J Munns (M), Dr C Burt (PEM), Mr S Mandelbrote (PET), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Beauregard (SE), Dr S Eves (SE), Dr C Sumnall (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr A Murray (TH), Revd Dr S Plant (TH), Dr M Hrebeniak (W), with Dr D Holburn (Senior Tutors' Committee), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Miss V Mills (Admissions Secretaries and Officers' Group), Miss A Eagling (Administrative Secretary, CAO), Miss R Lister (CAO) and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

In attendance: Ms K Guneratne (on behalf of Dr Hernandez, K).

The chair welcomed all new Admissions Tutors and thanked those who had agreed to act as mentors for them.

16/123 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr H Watson (JN), Dr F Hernandez (K), Dr S Martin (M), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr L MacVinish (W), Ms E Attridge (CUSU), Mr J Beard (CAO), and Mr T Levinson (CAO).

16/124 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 August were approved as an accurate record (AF 16/06/1) subject to amendments to minute 16/101 regarding the Working Party on the Winter Pool. It was noted that the minute did not clearly state that decisions should be taken in the best interests of candidates, rather than considering the best interests of the subject. The Director of Admissions confirmed that this would be made clear in the Winter Pool documentation.

16/125 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved.

16/126 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

16/127 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

i) Raw Marks (minute 16/92i)

The Director of Admissions reported that OFQUAL had advised that the Exam Boards in England would be providing schools with raw or scaled mark information on results day; and qualification level raw mark boundaries will be available on Exam Board websites. Raw marks will not be collected formally as part of this admissions round, but they may be collected and used for research purposes at the end of the round. *[Post-meeting note: not all Exam Boards are planning on including this information on candidates' results slips at this stage].*

It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would send a communication to interviewers detailing the difference between raw marks and Uniform Mark Scheme scores (UMS).

It was noted that in some instances raw marks were specifically being referenced in applications, and that it would therefore be acceptable to verify this if required.

Despite the instructions being clear when completing the Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ), it was noted that a number of applicants were not clear on how to complete the section regarding their qualifications, with some applicants being unsure if they are taking modular or linear A Levels. It was suggested that it could be helpful to cross reference the subject and year taken in order to know whether UMS or raw marks had been entered.

ii) Feedback Collected from Applicants in the Upcoming Admissions Round (minute 16/105)

The Director of Admissions confirmed that the collection of this feedback is up to individual Colleges; it is not mandatory, but could potentially be a useful tool. Peterhouse has circulated an example of their feedback request, however there is no universal position on this and it is not essential that all Colleges request feedback, or do so in exactly the same way.

iii) Core Maths Briefing (minute 16/111)

The Chair noted that Core Maths would not be reported on at this meeting of the Admissions Forum, but that it would instead be brought back to a future meeting.

16/128 ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENTS UPDATE

i) Issues Log

The assessment issues log was received for information (AF 16/06/2). The Director of Admissions reported that the detailed formal agreement and Memorandum of Understanding had now been agreed and signed off, and that the issue of mobile versions of the website showing inconsistent information had been resolved. The Director of Admissions confirmed that information on marking schemes was very nearly complete for all pre- and at-interview assessments and that this collated batch of information, including defined criteria and 'marks out of', would be circulated as soon as possible.

ii) Progress Report

A progress report was received for information (AF 16/06/3). The Director of Admissions reported that the project was still on schedule and that all elements had been proceeding as expected so far. It was noted that final registration numbers should be known on 17 October, and that CAO would try and reconcile registrations with applications as soon as possible once registration data is supplied by the Admissions Testing Service.

The Director of Admissions confirmed that it would not be necessary to formally mark all of the Section 2 scripts before deselection decisions are taken, providing they have been broadly reviewed and categorised. It was pointed out that sampling assessment scripts in this way, particularly in the first year of the assessments, was not in line with examining good practice, and that Colleges should be careful about how they utilise Section 2. It was noted that being realistic about what can and can't be done, given the timeframes, would be important. The importance of Colleges receiving all results, not just their own, in order to see where applicants sit in relation to the gathered field, was noted. It was **agreed** that CAO would circulate all results for each subject, rather than College by College.

iii) *Calculations of time spent on Section 2 marking by Colleges*

It was acknowledged that the marking of Section 2s would take a lot of time and that there has been interest in some subjects for collective marking arrangements. It was therefore requested that Admissions Tutors keep a log of the time taken to mark the Section 2 essays in order that data can be collected to consider whether collective marking arrangements should be pursued in future years. It was requested that Admissions Tutors also give an indication of how much of this time spent on marking was outsourced by Directors of Studies to other markers.

It was noted that it would be very helpful to have an update as soon as possible on the marking arrangements and common marking criteria for each subject. The Director of Admissions confirmed that she was already creating this document and that it would be circulated to College Admissions Offices shortly.

iv) *Section 2 Marking Pro-Forma*

A Section 2 Marking Pro-Forma will be drafted and circulated by the Director of Admissions as soon as possible to avoid annotation of the physical scripts.

v) *Admissions Assessment Steering Group*

Minutes of the Admissions Assessments Steering Group held on 27 September 2016 were received for information (AF 16/06/4).

A query was raised regarding scaling of scores across subjects, with particular reference to a number of humanities subjects that are sharing Section 1 papers. The Director of Admissions confirmed that scores will be scaled across all of these papers, and as such comparisons of applicants will be able to be made between the subjects with shared papers. *[Post-meeting note: the distributions of scores within subjects will also be made available, to enable comparison of the individual subject field].*

vi) *Computer Science at-interview assessment arrangements*

Computer Science have requested that Admissions Offices keep a record of the date on which the assessment is sat. These arrangements are likely to be reviewed in subsequent years.

vii) *Guidance document*

It was noted that guidance documents will be circulated by the Director of Admissions shortly to ensure all those involved in the assessments have clear information of the processes involved.

It was noted that, at the request of the Subject Convenor, Section 2 marks for Engineering would be incorporated into the second circulation of the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets, providing they are received by CAO by a set deadline. Further information regarding the deadlines involved will be disseminated to Directors of Studies (DoSs) through the Engineering Directors of Studies meeting.

16/129 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ADMISSIONS FORUM

The updated Terms of Reference for the Admissions Forum were received for information (AF 16/06/5).

16/130 UCAS REPORT ON UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

A UCAS report on Unconscious Bias in Admissions to Higher Education was received for information (AF 16/06/6). The Director of Admissions reported on the unsurprising conclusions of the report. It was noted that the removal of names from the process would create a lot of work and the potential for unintended, and undesirable,

consequences. Consideration would need to be given to whether any of the recommendations could be followed up in the Cambridge context.

It was noted that a section on unconscious bias will be incorporated into the online Admissions Selection Training. This will be a short video, developed by Personal and Professional Development (PPD), which could usefully be circulated to experienced interviewers too, with a strong recommendation that they watch it. Unconscious bias will also be spoken about in the face-to-face training.

16/131 APPLICATIONS, OFFERS, AND ACCEPTANCES FOR 2016 ENTRY VS FOUR YEAR TREND

Data on applications, offers and acceptances for 2016 entry vs a four year trend were received for information (AF 16/06/7). The Director of Admissions reported on the OFFA targets for 2016 entry; the final figure was slightly over target on maintained sector entry and the POLAR target was narrowly missed, although by a smaller margin than in the previous year.

It was noted that application numbers were looking broadly stable, although it was still too early to get a firm picture. EU application numbers were down - the announcement regarding fees may have made a difference but it was too early to say and it was doubtful that this would cause a significant shift. Further information on application numbers by subject would be circulated following the open application allocation.

16/132 MVST MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS

Extracts of the Faculty Board of Biology and the Medical Education Committee minutes were received for information along with the examination requirements for matriculation (AF 16/06/8a,b). The Director of Admissions reported on the matriculation requirements set down in the Statutes and Ordinances. A review is currently underway (since they still refer to AS Levels) and the Faculty Board of Biology has suggested a change in matriculation requirements for MVST to Chemistry plus two further maths/science subjects, thus making it a requirement for applicants to have three maths/science A Levels including Chemistry.

Care needs to be taken to ensure the Faculty Board does not make recommendations that conflict with what Colleges have been considering in relation to qualification reform and the availability of A Level subject combinations and overall provision. The implications for the International Baccalaureate and other qualifications also need to be considered. A move to 3 A Levels could be a real barrier for some applicants, particularly those applicants to the Cambridge Graduate Course in Medicine (CGCM).

It was noted that matriculation requirements are minimum requirements, and that entrance requirements are usually all higher than these.

It was **agreed** that Admissions Forum should report back to the Faculty Board recommending that the matriculation requirements should be Chemistry A Level plus one other maths or science A Level, stressing that this is not the entry requirement for the course. It was felt that it would be unfortunate if the Faculty Board was perceived as trying to set the entry requirements, which is a Collegiate responsibility. It was further **agreed** that clarification should be sought as to whether these matriculation requirements are intended to also apply to Veterinary Medicine, and whether they have been consulted.

It was noted that the matriculation requirements for Mathematics would also need reviewing due to the current mention of AS Level Further Mathematics and the requirements for Classics would need updating to specify Ancient Greek or Latin. A full review of all subject matriculation requirements is being conducted by the Educational

and Student Policy office; a revised set of information will be brought to a future meeting of the Admissions Forum.

16/133 QUALIFICATION REFORM AND GCSE EQUIVALENCIES

Two papers on qualification reform from Durham Johnston School and a paper on GCSE equivalencies from UCAS were received for information (AF 16/06/9a,b,c). Thanks were expressed to Steve McArdle from Durham Johnston School.

16/134 MEDICINE QUOTA

There was nothing to report as this matter is being handled elsewhere.

16/135 OPEN OFFERS FOR FLAGGED APPLICANTS

A paper was received for consideration (AF 16/06/10a). Research papers on POLAR3 and OAC admissions targets and applicants with both POLAR3 and OAC flags were received for information (AF 16/06/10b,c,d). The Director of Admissions reported on the proposal to expand the open offers scheme.

Attention was drawn to the finding that the conversion rate (ie from offer to acceptance) of flagged applicants is lower than their non-flagged counterparts, and that offer-making may need to reflect this.

It was noted that Colleges felt less secure about what the external examinations systems guarantee given the new, and yet untested, curriculum changes. What can be extrapolated from the examination grades is less certain than previously.

After discussion, it was **agreed** that the idea of expanding the open offers scheme is a good one and that it should be explored further. One suggestion was widening the eligibility criteria to other worthy candidates, such as those with the 'in care' flag.

The Director of Admissions reported that the idea had met with universal support from Subject Convenors, who had suggested a meeting take place between Subject Convenors and relevant colleagues to review the remaining pool files and establish a list of those who should be considered for open offers at the conclusion of the poolside meeting.

It was **agreed** that a Working Party should be established to look at this in more detail. Dr P Wingfield, Dr C Burt, Dr E Tomlinson, Dr A Spencer and Dr S Davis volunteered for this Working Party.

It was further **agreed** that should this scheme expand, appropriate publicity would be needed.

16/136 STEP SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Details of the STEP Support Programme were received for consideration (AF 16/06/11). The Director of Admissions reported on the new programme, which replaces the STEP Correspondence Course and Easter School. This new programme is aimed at providing support to applicants who have little support elsewhere. It will consist of open access online material available to all, and then more tailored additional support for offer holders. Some extra support will also be made available to selected offer holders including a one day visit to Cambridge. Those who are not eligible for this visit will still be able to take advantage of the online support. State school students in POLAR3 quintile 5 have been excluded from the eligibility criteria due to current capacity issues which will hopefully be addressed in subsequent years.

It was felt that the selection criteria for the additional support, as set out in the paper, were acceptable and it was suggested that the low performing GCSE school flag be added as an additional criterion.

It was noted that Colleges will need to get all of their offers into CamSIS by the end of January in order that selection can take place according to the timetable.

Within the next week Colleges will need to communicate with applicants to alert them of this resource. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would circulate the text to be used when communicating with applicants to Admissions Offices. The text will need to be sent to applicants to Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering, where STEP offers are made.

16/137 COLLEGES' WIDENING PARTICIPATION TARGETS

A paper on the targets for widening participation expenditure by Colleges was received for information (AF 16/06/12). The Director of Admissions reported on changes regarding expenditure falling into this category. Though it is still important that Colleges record expenditure that distinguishes continuing projects (old spend) separately from new spend (as the latter is what will concern our discussions with OFFA), the target for outreach spending for each College is based on total expenditure (old and new) and is set according to the number of regulated fee undergraduate students in that College.

This change will happen over a two or three year period where there is a required increase in spend, to allow Colleges time to adjust. It was noted that these targets would be a minimum spend, but wouldn't prevent over target expenditure on widening participation activities.

The Bursars' Committee had requested this be considered by Admissions Forum and the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC). It was felt that the proposal was reasonable and it was therefore **agreed** by Admissions Forum.

Attention was drawn to the proposal that, where Colleges are unable to spend up to their target those funds would be added to a central pot for collective activities, for example to cover interviewee travel costs.

It was stressed that all money spent on widening participation is coming from additional fee income, and that it is not linked in any way to endowments. Therefore Colleges cannot state that they cannot afford to spend the required expenditure on widening participation. This message had been clearly communicated to Bursars.

16/138 VOCAL ASSESSMENT DAYS

The Chair reported on concerns about the Vocal Assessment Days. It was felt that previous discussions had not explicitly spelt out that academic assessment must not take place on these days.

It was **agreed** that the vocal assessment days are not part of the academic process and that no element of academic assessment should be part of the activities on those days.

16/139 APPLICANT PHOTO

The Director of Admissions raised the issue of whether the applicant photo was still required at the point of application.

Whilst identity verification could be an issue, and was raised the last time this matter was discussed, it was noted that applicants could be asked to bring their passport to interview for this purpose.

It was noted that where interviewers are interviewing multiple candidates the photo acts as an aide memoire, and also minimises the risk of the wrong applicant being interviewed.

The view was expressed that with the current focus of the political agenda on unconscious bias, although there are good reasons for having the photo supplied at the point of application, any media coverage of our requirement is unlikely to be positive.

An alternative approach would be to mask the photo at the initial application stage, until deselection decisions have been taken, although the technicalities of this are unknown and would need to be explored. However, this approach would still be problematic and time consuming as applicant files would have to be reloaded to Moodle once the photos were released.

There was limited support for changing the current process. It was therefore **agreed** that this item be put on hold and thought about in more detail before returning to it at a later stage.

16/140 SUBJECTS CONVENORS AND PRE-POOL MODERATION MEETINGS

Final details of the 2016/17 Subject Convenors were received for information (AF 16/06/13a). Attention was drawn to the change in Subject Convenor for Modern and Medieval Languages. Pre-pool moderation meeting arrangements were also received for information (AF 16/06/13b). It was noted that a final version will be circulated by email.

Concerns were raised regarding the increase in the responsibilities of Subject Convenors; it is now a much bigger job than it used to be and there is a need to look at remuneration which has not been reviewed in several years. It was **agreed** that this should be referred to the Senior Tutors' Committee and Bursars for consideration.

16/141 FOUNDATION YEAR PROGRESS

A Briefing on Foundation Year Programmes and a presentation of the findings of a Foundation Year research project were received for information (AF16/06/14a,b). The Director of Admissions reported on the research conducted by an Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) intern over the summer.

Their brief was to investigate what the current landscape looks like. Most universities, including most Russell Group universities, have some form of foundation programme and there are various different models.

Thanks were given to Jim Gazzard (ICE) and all members of the Working Group for the good work that has gone into this, particularly the intern, Colm Murphy. The next stage in this process would be to produce a set of proposals of what such a programme could look like.

The general idea would be to start with the Arts and Humanities as the focus, as those are the subjects which struggle most in terms of attracting applications from widening participation backgrounds. Attracting applicants to subjects like History of Art can be problematic, especially if they are unable to get exposure to the subject at school.

The programme could potentially be a year-long standalone bridging programme, although there are various possibilities to be explored.

The consideration of funds and fees would be absolutely essential and, if widening participation is going to be the main motive, then funding would need to be resolved from the outset. It was felt that this type of programme could be very appealing to alumni donors.

The issue of accommodation was raised; one option would be to have a blended programme, with a mixture of some online content and some residential periods at Madingley Hall. It is not intended that the programme be 100% residential in Colleges.

It was felt that, should this be undertaken, it should be done collectively at University level; it must ensure that students benefit from completing the year and receive a formal qualification as a result, which could be accepted by other institutions as well as Cambridge.

It was **recommended** that the Working Group be encouraged to continue exploring the possibilities in relation to a foundation year and bring back strawman proposals to a future meeting.

16/142 ADMISSIONS SELECTION TRAINING

The Director of Admissions reported that further volunteers are required and that she would circulate the request again. New Admissions Tutors were encouraged to volunteer, should they wish to do so, as it will be possible to pair them with experienced Admissions Tutors. Additional experienced volunteers are also needed, regardless of subject speciality.

16/143 CAMSIS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP CHAIR

The Director of Admissions requested a volunteer to Chair the CamSIS Special Interest Group. It was **agreed** that Miss Reed would circulate the request by email.

16/144 OVERSEAS INTERVIEW TEAM LEADER

A document providing further details was received for information (AF 16/06/15). The Director of Admissions reported on the current arrangements, which rely on good will and volunteers doing this for free. It was reported that being so dependent on certain individuals creates vulnerability in the system and there is a need to create stability in the longer term.

There is now capacity in the budget to recompense those involved as team leaders and the proposal was **approved**.

16/145 MEDIA UPDATE

A report from Dr Almeroth-Williams was received for information (AF 16/06/16). Dr Almeroth-Williams reported on the media interest in Oxford's league table position and the positive coverage resulting from the Director of Admissions' appearance at the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC).

Dr Almeroth-Williams summarised items of media interest. The Universities UK report had been published and did not attack any individual universities or get much attention. There were no clear recommendations in the report and the University was not asked for comments, other than by student press.

A report on a Sutton Trust poll of teachers revealed gaping holes but was not critical of 'Oxbridge'.

The Sunday Times will be running an extensive Brexit related story focusing on women and STEM. There is also interest in female academic staffing within these subjects. The numbers of women in STEM would look worse in light of Brexit and the

implications of this due to the large number of women with non-UK citizenship, particularly from Eastern Europe, studying and working within these subjects.

It was noted that The Cambridge Student enquiry in relation to access talks at independent schools was now a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. This will need to go through the due process in each College. It was confirmed that the Director of Admissions and Dr Almeroth-Williams would provide supporting text to the response. Dr Reid is aware and is likely to send a response on behalf of all Colleges to request clarification. Colleges were reassured that they do not need to do anything at this stage other than respond to the email stating that as this is now a FOI it will be dealt with through that process.

16/146 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS

A summary of FOI requests recently serviced by CAO was received for information (AF 16/06/17).

16/147 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Admissions Research Steering Group held on 6 September 2016* (AF 16/06/18)
- ii) *Teacher Engagement Strategy Group held on 26 September 2016* (AF 16/06/19)
- iii) *CamSIS Special Interest Group held on 27 September 2016* (AF 16/06/20)
- iv) *CAO Management Group held on 28 September 2016* (AF 16/06/21)
- v) *Colleges' Outreach Monitoring Group held on 4 October 2016* (AF 16/06/22)

16/148 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- i) *Classics Second College Interviews*

The Director of Admissions reported that Directors of Studies in Classics have formally agreed that College Admissions Offices should be responsible for organising second College interviews once candidates have been assigned to a second College by the Faculty.

16/149 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 18 November 2016 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2016/17 have been agreed as:

Friday 20 January 2017
 Friday 24 February 2017
 Friday 21 April 2017
 Friday 2 June 2017
 Wednesday 16 August 2017

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 18 November 2016** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, MUR), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions, N), Dr A Bond (CAI), Dr S Houghton-Walker (CAI), Dr E Tomlinson (CHR), Dr A Barbrook (CHU), Dr N Cutler (CHU), Professor H Griffiths (CL), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr D Bainbridge (CTH), Dr M Correia (DOW), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Gemelos (ED), Dr C Russell (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr M Steinfeld (HH), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr B Post (JE), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr F Hernandez (K), Dr V Harvey (LC), Dr S Martin (M), Dr J Munns (M), Dr C Burt (PEM), Dr A Zsak (PET), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr S Connell (SE), Dr C Sumnall (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr A Murray (TH), Dr L MacVinish (W), with Dr D Holburn (Senior Tutors' Committee), Ms E Attridge (CUSU), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Miss V Mills (Admissions Administrators' Group), Mr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group), Mr J Beard (CAO), Miss A Eagling (Administrative Secretary, CAO), Miss R Lister (CAO) and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

16/150 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr S Davis (G), Revd Dr S Plant (TH), Dr M Hrebeniak (W) and Mr T Levinson (CAO).

16/151 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 October 2016 were approved as an accurate record (AF 16/07/1) subject to the inclusion of an additional sentence in minute 16/128 ii) regarding admissions assessments:

The Director of Admissions confirmed that it would not be necessary to formally mark all of the Section 2 scripts before deselection decisions are taken, providing they have been broadly reviewed and categorised. It was pointed out that sampling assessment scripts in this way, particularly in the first year of the assessments, was not in line with examining good practice, and that Colleges should be careful about how they utilise Section 2. It was noted that being realistic about what can and can't be done, given the timeframes, would be important. The importance of Colleges receiving all results, not just their own, in order to see where applicants sit in relation to the gathered field, was noted. It was **agreed** that CAO would circulate all results for each subject, rather than College by College.

16/152 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved with the exception of items 20 i) and 20 iii).

16/153 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

16/154 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

i) *Core Maths Briefing (minute 16/111)*

The Chair reported that an assessment and recommendation on what Colleges might do about this will come to a future meeting for discussion, following consideration of A Level Further Maths.

16/155 ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENTS UPDATE*i) Issues Log*

The assessment issues log was received for information (AF 16/07/2).

ii) Progress Report

A progress report was received for information (AF 16/07/3). The Director of Admissions reported that all Section 2 scripts had been distributed to Colleges as soon as possible, with the vast majority being distributed by Tuesday 8 November. 6 scripts are still being chased by ATS. The Section 1 results arrived as planned between 14 and 18 November, with the ELAT having just arrived. The Admissions and Data Services (ADS) team within CAO matched and turned the Section 1 results around within one hour of them being released by ATS. Reported scores will be loaded into CamSIS as soon as possible by ADS. 'Straggler' results will be released by ATS as soon as possible; these are cases where there was a delay in receiving the scripts from the centre. BMAT results are due to be released by ATS by close of play on 23 November.

Thanks were given to ADS for their hard work in operating the script sorting centre and for ensuring the Section 1 results were processed and disseminated very quickly.

It was noted that there had been no media enquiries regarding the pre-interview admissions assessments.

At-interview versions of the pre-interview assessments will be provided to Colleges for mop-up sessions; the Director of Admissions will be in contact with the Colleges next week. There will be no obligation to use the common materials provided and arrangements are likely to vary by subject (for example, Economics mop-ups will be handed by the Subject Convenor). For most subjects, distribution of materials is likely to be via the CAO Document Pickup Moodle site.

It was noted that it would be wise to check performance on paper alongside interview performance in the small number of cases where non-registered applicants have been interviewed overseas.

The Director of Admissions reported that the various arrangements for at-interview assessments were on track and that any enquiries regarding these should be directed to her in the first instance, and not to CAO.

It had previously been agreed that no communication regarding decisions should take place with applicants to subjects with pre-interview assessments prior to 14 November. There may have been some exceptions to this, and it was agreed that this should be added to the review of the first year of the assessments.

Whilst it had previously been agreed that applicants should be given two weeks' notice of interview, it was noted that with the BMAT results not being released until 23 November the timing would be very tight. As the BMAT is a well-established test, decisions had sometimes been communicated in previous years before the results had been received. However, due to the lack of UMS this year communications are being delayed until the results are received. It was **agreed** that this should also be discussed as part of the review. Colleges were asked to be mindful of the need for early calls to interview for visa purposes.

16/156 DISCUSSION ON THE CURRENT ADMISSIONS ROUND

Papers on the number of direct and open applications received by Colleges and course, as well as information on overall figures by subject, school type and POLAR3 compared to last year were received for information (AF 16/07/4a,b).

The Director of Admissions reported that applications were up overall, but that there had been a 14% drop in EU applications and a 3% drop in overseas applications. There had been a substantial increase in UK applications. The distribution of Home applicants was broadly in line with the patterns of last year in terms of the proportion of state and independent school applicants. There had been a slight increase in both groups, with a slightly bigger increase in independents.

The Director of Admissions reported on the alternative 'Home' classification (ref: AF 16/07/4b). The classification of 'Home' is currently UK citizens permanently resident in the UK, therefore excluding from our reporting those non-UK citizens resident in the UK. Moving to include those students in our reporting has the potential to create a slight decrease in maintained figures, with increases to numbers holding POLAR 1 and 2 and OAC LPN flags.

This change would bring reporting more in line with the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), which already reports UK residents (not nationals), and whose performance indicators are used by OFFA. Although such statistics are unlikely to ever completely match those of HESA, as it has its own way of reporting, it was felt that it is important to align wherever possible and this proposed change would bring them closer.

Whilst there was general agreement of the proposal, the proposed change would have a big impact on certain Colleges, and further information and clarity in the form of a paper to be brought to the next meeting was requested. There is a need to compare previous years of data in order to consider the impact.

As a decision needs to be taken fairly quickly, it was **agreed** that this would be done by circulation.

Issues arising from the current admissions round were discussed. Concern was expressed over one perceived skew in the pattern of applications this year, and it was posited that differences in communications strategies between Colleges might have been responsible. Our message to the public is that Colleges do not differ in the education they provide, and that applicants are not disadvantaged by their choice of College. We try to avoid schools receiving competing messages. It was observed that some Colleges do have particular challenges, in terms of the numbers they need to attract in certain subjects, and that it would be helpful if colleagues could come to the next meeting with suggestions on how we might harmonise our communications strategies in order to ensure that such challenges are overcome, collectively.

16/157 MVST TRIPOS SPLIT

A paper outlining the proposal to split the MVST Tripos on academic grounds was received for consideration (AF 16/07/5).

The splitting of the MVST Tripos had been discussed in the past within the proposal to lower the course requirements for Veterinary Medicine applicants. The Director of Admissions emphasised that the three items concerning Veterinary Medicine should be handled separately.

A decision regarding the proposal to split the Tripos would be needed by the end of Michaelmas term in order to effect change for 2018 entry.

The proposal had already been to the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC) owing to the way in which the meetings fall this term. The STC was of the view that the Tripos should be split, and that there is an academic case for this, subject to approval by the Admissions Forum.

The proposal had also been through the Faculty Board of Veterinary Medicine, the Veterinary Education Committee, and the General Board Education Committee (GBEC). It had additionally been to the Faculty Board of Biology where some concerns were raised by the Faculty Office; a sub-committee was subsequently formed to look at the administrative and resource issues raised. The sub-committee met and reported that, from an administrative point of view, there is no reason that this proposal should not go ahead. No educational concerns were raised. The expectation is that the proposal will be approved by the Faculty Board of Biology by the end of this month.

For its part, no objections were raised by the Admissions Forum. It was noted that the next step would be for GBEC to make a proposal to the General Board in order to take this change forward.

16/158 VETERINARY MEDICINE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

[Item 10 (Veterinary Medicine Admissions Assessment) was taken before this item on the agenda].

The Director of Admissions reported on the request to reconsider a proposal to lower the entry requirement to A*AA and consider a change to the required subjects.

The proposal to lower the entry requirement had already been rejected twice; the last time it was discussed was when it was still a shared Tripos. The in-tandem approach, of the lowering of the offer being conditional on agreement for the Tripos split effective from the same point, has support from STC, whereas the lowering of the offer alone did not. The Director of Admissions welcomed views for and against the proposal.

Requiring two A*s is considered a deterrent, even to those who will go on to achieve two or more A*s. The high proportion of female students applying for Veterinary Medicine may result in applicants underestimating their final A Level outcomes.

Lowering the offer could attract more applications from those who are likely to achieve more than one A* but who would otherwise not consider applying; it is not the intention to solely recruit applicants with one A*. There has been an increase in applications this year, but numbers are still considerably lower than before the requirements increased to A*A*A.

Concern was raised that other subjects are facing this same issue as typical offers are higher than those of competitors, and that should Veterinary Medicine decrease their offer level, other subjects may wish to follow suit. It was noted that Psychological and Behavioural Sciences (PBS), where the typical offer is A*AA, is not a standard science subject since Maths and science subjects are not a requirement, although recommended.

The number of A*s achieved at A Level does have a good correlation with Tripos performance, and there was a feeling that it would be irresponsible to even admit a small number of applicants with one A*.

Concern was voiced over changing the entry requirement in this period of disruption of the Tripos splitting and the admissions assessment changing, and that if candidates are doing the same assessment as applicants to Natural Sciences, it would not make sense to have a different offer level.

There was interest in the proposal to make use of the UCAS Adjustment period and it was felt this could help to fill places with applicants who are likely to do well.

High academic standards need to be maintained, but Colleges should be mindful that high offer levels may further reduce applications to the course. There is an all-time high of places available in the UK for Veterinary Medicine with the arrival of new Vet Schools, and the number of applicants to the subject is at a 6 year low so competition is even stronger. Whilst Adjustment is an interesting idea, taking on students who have not been assessed in the normal way could set a problematic precedent. However, those students who had previously been rejected after interview could be picked up through Adjustment where they have achieved the required grades. The use of Adjustment will require further consideration.

There is a discrepancy between Cambridge's typical offer level and other Vet Schools; no other school asks for any A*s yet Colleges ask for two. Psychologically, this is a barrier and causes a problem with perception in schools and with applicants; applicants do not want to take the risk.

The quality of the field needs to be considered alongside UMS from previous years. Those applicants achieving less than two A*s at A Level are more at risk of achieving a 2:2 and this needs to be investigated, looking at the statistical evidence. It was noted that all of this evidence has been presented previously.

A vote took place on the proposal to lower the typical offer level for Veterinary Medicine in which 16 Colleges voted in favour of the change, 7 voted against, and 4 abstained. The recommendation to lower the offer level was therefore **approved** and it was **agreed** that this would be reviewed in two or three years.

16/159 VETERINARY MEDICINE ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

A paper outlining the proposal to move from the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) to the Natural Sciences Admissions Assessment (NSAA) for Veterinary Medicine was received for consideration (AF 16/07/6). The Director of Admissions reported on the proposal and explained that the BMAT does not have a strong correlation with Veterinary Tripos outcomes. The requirement for applicants to sit the BMAT is also a perceived barrier; Cambridge is the only Veterinary School now to require it, and applicants must pay a fee to take it. Other Vet Schools have mini tests at interview or various questionnaires, but no admissions tests in advance.

A decision also needs to be taken regarding requirements for graduate and mature applicants. It was felt that the requirements should be in line with all of the other subjects in the University.

Using the NSAA would have an effect on how the course is perceived and would emphasise that applications from those who are strong in the physical sciences are welcomed. Applicants to Veterinary Medicine would not be restricted at all in terms of the elements they could take within the NSAA.

Whilst the use of the NSAA could still be seen as a deterrent, the course is perceived as medically skewed currently, and this change would help to address this.

It was **recommended** that a group of Vets and Biologists would need to meet to work on the NSAA and that the Vets should help in the writing of the assessment. The need to be mindful of timing in regards to the new prospectus was noted.

With the requirements for Natural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine overlapping so much, the Admissions Forum was generally in favour of this proposal and it was therefore **approved**.

16/160 MATHEMATICS COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A document detailing a proposed change to include A Level Further Mathematics or equivalent as essential for the Mathematics Tripos was received for consideration (AF 16/07/7). The Director of Admissions reported on the proposal, which had been considered by the Directors of Studies (DoS) meeting on 15 November. After discussion that included consideration of social mobility, the DoS meeting agreed *nem con* to support the Faculty Board of Mathematics recommendation that A Level Further Maths or IB Higher Level Maths, or an equivalent qualification, should be essential (required by all Colleges) for the Mathematical Tripos.

It was noted that schools need Cambridge to confirm that Further Mathematics is really important; if this subject is to survive it needs firm support. Funding in schools is a real issue. Changing the Mathematics course requirements to include Further Mathematics would accurately reflect the real practice in Colleges too, giving a strong reason to favour this proposal.

There is uncertainty over what degree of choice schools actually have; there could be a risk that certain schools will just stop sending applicants to Cambridge because they cannot afford to run Further Mathematics. It was felt, however, that this is not a reason not to agree to the proposal. It was felt that working together with other institutions which require it could be beneficial in encouraging schools to provide it.

Reforms to A Level Mathematics will see the introduction of a linear qualification, with no unit choices, which will have implications for certain courses at Cambridge in the future. The need to actively lobby politicians to get them to think more carefully about the reforms in Mathematics was raised.

The forming of an intercollegiate group to look at Cambridge's mathematical requirements in more detail and to monitor the impact in relation to the Further Mathematics requirement was proposed by the Director of Admissions. The issues would also need to be looked at in the context of our Physical Natural Sciences and Engineering courses; it needs to be made clear that Further Mathematics is really useful for science courses and not just the Mathematical Tripos.

Concern was raised that applicants could be put off by the inclusion of Further Mathematics as a requirement, however it was noted that the number of applicants presenting without Further Mathematics was extremely small.

The proposed change would come into effect for those applying in October 2018 for entry in October 2019; an announcement would be required in the forthcoming prospectus warning schools of this change so that they can plan appropriately. Applicants without Further Maths will simply not be sufficiently prepared for Mathematics at Cambridge. Furthermore, applicants asked to complete STEP III would be unable to do so successfully without having studied Further Maths. It was stressed that there will be no requirement for applicants to achieve an A* in Further Maths, simply to have successfully completed the full A Level (or equivalent) course.

Whilst it was requested that statistical analysis is performed on those admitted with only Maths or AS Further Maths and how well they perform at Tripos, it was remarked that the sample would be so small that no statistically valid conclusions could be drawn from it.

In terms of the International Baccalaureate, students generally study Higher Level Maths and Physics, with the Physics course covering mechanics, therefore providing sufficient preparation.

There would likely be a trickle-down effect of this change on other science subjects. The symbolic decision would be taken for Maths regardless of future changes in other subjects; Colleges need to give the outside world a clear message about the value of and support for Further Mathematics.

More broadly, concern was raised that a model of 3 A Levels plus the Extended Project Qualification is likely to eclipse the 3 A Level plus a fourth AS Level profile in the future. It was **agreed** that the messaging around the EPQ needs to be considered as soon as possible.

The Admissions Forum **agreed** *nem con* with the proposal set out in the paper that A Level Further Maths or IB Higher Level Physics or an equivalent qualification should be essential (required by all Colleges) for the Mathematical Tripos. It was **agreed** that an announcement should be added to the prospectus this year to make applicants and advisers aware of the coming change for 2019 Entry. It was further **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would organise the formation of an intercollegiate working group to further investigate the concerns raised and to monitor the impact of the changes in relation to Mathematics.

16/161 COLLEGE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Miss Lister reported that a document containing details from Colleges of the A Level (or equivalent) subjects essential for admission to each Tripos had been circulated earlier this week for review.

Miss Lister requested that Colleges make the Student Recruitment and Information team at CAO aware if any of the information is inaccurate or if any changes have occurred since the information was provided in August by no later than 27 November in order that College entry requirements are accurately reflected in the new Undergraduate Prospectus, which will be going to print shortly. If Colleges are happy with the information in the document they do not need to take any action.

Miss Lister reported that the Faculty of Music and Directors of Studies (DoS) in Music had proposed a change to the subject requirements for the Music Tripos for 2018 entry.

The proposal is for all Colleges to require A Level/IB Higher Level (or equivalent) Music; and for all Colleges to accept ABRSM Grade 8 Theory (merit and above) as an alternative/substitute (in all cases). With the exception of one College, all other DoS had agreed this proposal. As this is an Admissions Forum matter, it was **agreed** that Miss Lister would flag these details to College Admissions Tutors by circulation as soon as possible with a request that they notify her if they object to this position by the end of 27 November.

After discussion regarding the need to consider working towards consistency on entry requirements, it was **agreed** that Colleges should at least flag in an obvious location on their websites where their requirements differ from the norm in order to aid applicants in finding important information easily.

16/162 OPEN OFFERS FOR FLAGGED APPLICANTS

A paper was received for information (AF 16/07/8). The Director of Admissions reported on the proposals from the Working Group and how the scheme would work in practice.

It was noted that there is scope for the scheme to extend to other underrepresented groups but it needs to be restricted in the first instance in order to keep it manageable.

The figure of 4 offers per subject was queried, particularly in terms of large subjects. It was confirmed that this figure is flexible and that more offers could be made. The need to ensure that the right number of offers are made in numbers managed subjects was noted.

Timing will be extremely tight at the Winter Pool, and the importance of files being marked correctly was stressed. Subject Convenors will sign files out and pass them to the Director of Admissions; CAO will not be expected to do this.

It was confirmed that applicants to joint Triposes could still be eligible for open offers in the joint Tripos.

In Medicine and Veterinary Medicine it was agreed that the same flags should also be taken into account, although not only flagged applicants will get offers. Numbers of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine open offers made to flagged applicants will be taken into account when the Open Offer Panels for these two subjects meet, so that an appropriate number of further offers can be determined. It was noted that the right number of offers to be made is slightly more than the number made in previous years.

It was **recommended** that Subject Convenors be issued with clear instructions on the detailed workings of this scheme.

It was suggested that any further comments regarding the details of the scheme should be directed to the Director of Admissions. The proposal was otherwise **approved**.

16/163 CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION (CUSU) SHADOWING SCHEME

A paper on the CUSU Shadowing Scheme was received for information (AF 16/07/9). The Chair reported on safeguarding issues, and ensuring the Safeguarding Lead is an appropriately senior figure in College, usually the Senior Tutor. The Chair was keen to ensure that everyone who is responsible for safeguarding is aware of this scheme and how it is managed by CUSU.

No concerns were raised.

16/164 INTERVIEW SCORES ON SUBJECT MODERATION SPREADSHEETS

The Director of Admissions reported that a query had been raised regarding the Subject Moderation Spreadsheet guidance in relation to columns BL-BQ.

It was **agreed** that columns BL-BQ on the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets should be populated with actual interview scores, not 'overall gradings'. The Subject Moderation Spreadsheet guidance notes will be updated and recirculated to reflect this.

It was further **agreed** that whilst the interview score should be entered in the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets for overseas interviewees, it is the overall score which should be used for compulsory pooling such applicants.

It was queried how scores are entered into CamSIS, and it was confirmed that this is done either by the DoS or the Admissions Administrator, and not by CAO. However, as interview reports can vary by interviewer, subject and candidate, not all scores are entered into CamSIS. It was hoped that this clarification regarding which scores to record would enable more consistency on interview reports.

16/165 POOLSIDE MEETING SCHEDULE

A schedule of Winter Pool meetings was received for information (AF 16/07/10).

16/166 PRE-POOL MEETING SCHEDULE

A final list of Pre-Pool meetings was received for information (AF 16/07/11).

16/167 MEDIA UPDATE

A report from Dr Almeroth-Williams was received for information (AF 16/07/12). Dr Almeroth-Williams reported that the Today programme was requesting an interview tomorrow morning about applications from Free School Meals students from the North East. Dr Almeroth-Williams had politely declined an interview with the Director of Admissions, causing Today to approach individual Colleges. It was suggested that Colleges also politely decline the request given the short notice, lack of availability and bad timing. Dr Almeroth-Williams has sent a basic statement to the programme to help them avoid inaccuracies. This includes pointing out that the data in the report (from 2010) underestimates the number of students coming to Cambridge from the North East.

A statement had been sent to the Guardian regarding the decline in EU applications. Whilst it is unusual to release data at this level, the story was handled very fairly and a balanced account was put forward.

The Welsh media has looked at the Seren Network more closely; early signs look positive. Data from 2015 was provided to BBC Wales; the tone of the report was very positive and featured a first year student.

Dr Almeroth-Williams provided an update on The Cambridge Student enquiry regarding Schools Liaison Officers (SLOs) supposedly organising access events with independent schools. It transpired that this enquiry was based on a misunderstanding and that the event in question was a conference which involved no members of staff from the College. This story has now gone away. SLOs who had responded to Dr Almeroth-Williams' request for further information were thanked, and their responses showed that the work undertaken by them was exactly in line with what was expected.

Last week the programme 'Will Britain Ever Have a Black Prime Minister' aired on the BBC. This programme focused on Oxford, with a section of the documentary filmed there. Oxford refused to give comment on their admissions or access record which, whilst more problematic for Oxford, had repercussions for Cambridge as there was inference that the two institutions are one and the same. Cambridge had not been asked to comment, but would have engaged if so.

The Director of Admissions has been engaging with Dr Fenton-Glynn of the Faculty of Law to provide advice on applying for Law, which will appear in the coming week.

16/168 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS

A summary of FOI requests recently serviced by CAO was received for information (AF 16/07/13).

16/169 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 3 October 2016* (AF 16/07/14)
Clarification was sought regarding minute 6. e) which reported that there was a desire across the intercollegiate University for a single body to take greater responsibility for the strategic overview of undergraduate admissions, and that the

UAC would be best placed to oversee and agree strategic decisions on admissions policy.

The Director of Admissions clarified that investigative work is being undertaken to look at how decisions taken by one body can impact on other groups, for example STC and Bursars which work in parallel, and ensuring there is join up. The structural make up of both College and University committees is being considered with a view to ensuring important decisions are taken in the way they should and that communication between groups is strengthened.

It was confirmed that a new body is not being created. As the UAC has the widest representation, including Bursars, Colleges and the University, it will develop a structure which works within the collegiate institution.

- ii) *Mature Strategy Group held on 4 October 2016* (AF 16/07/15)
- iii) *Information and Publication Sub Group held on 5 October 2016* (AF 16/07/16)
Attention was drawn to minute 16/25 regarding the 2018 Entry Undergraduate Prospectus. Concern was raised that the statement regarding the weekly time commitment typically expected of undergraduates was not in line with a survey conducted by Which?, and that approval should be sought from the Senior Tutors' Standing Committee on Education before the Prospectus goes to print. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would raise this at the next meeting of the STC. The need for accuracy and to avoid conflicting data was noted, and it was **agreed** that Dr Burt would send the survey data from Which? to the Director of Admissions.
- iv) *Admissions Research Steering Group held on 18 October 2016* (AF 16/07/17)
- v) *Outreach Steering Group held on 20 October 2016* (AF 16/07/18)
- vi) *Schools' and Colleges' Liaison Officers' Group held on 24 October 2016* (AF 16/07/19)
- vii) *Cambridge Bursary Scheme Sub Group held on 1 November 2016* (AF 16/07/20)

16/170 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) Under-age admission policy

Mr Beard reported that the current under-age admission policy does not include any advice on liaising with the Faculty or Department in which the student will be taught. Mr Beard proposed that this be included in the policy given that the College is admitting to a wider community than just the College itself. The current process should be amended to factor in that there is a wider implication to be considered.

It was **agreed** that Mr Beard should draft a form of words on how Colleges should consult with Faculties/Departments in cases of applicants under 16 years of age and those aged between 16 and 18. This wording will be brought back to the next meeting of the Admissions Forum for approval.

ii) Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion admissions assessment arrangements

The Director of Admissions reported that due to a drop in applications, the Divinity Directors of Studies would like to withdraw from the pre-interview assessment and move to an at-interview assessment, in line with Philosophy. This change was **approved** and should therefore be reflected in the new prospectus.

iii) Winter Pool Numbers

Concern was raised that, due to A Level reforms, there may be considerably fewer compulsory pool applicants. It was requested that Colleges with lots of applications be mindful of this as those with fewer applications still need a decent sized pool from which to fish.

16/171 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 20 January 2017 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2016/17 have been agreed as:

Friday 24 February 2017

Friday 21 April 2017

Friday 2 June 2017

Wednesday 16 August 2017

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

CAO/30.11.2016

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 20 January 2017** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, MUR), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions (N), Dr A Bond (CAI), Dr S Houghton-Walker (CAI), Dr E Tomlinson (CHR), Dr A Barbrook (CHU), Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr D Bainbridge (CTH), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Gemelos (ED), Dr P Howell (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr S Davis (G), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr M Steinfeld (HH), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr B Post (JE), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr F Hernandez (K), Dr V Harvey (LC), Dr J Munns (M), Dr C Burt (PEM), Dr A Zsák (PET), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr D Beauregard (SE), Dr S Eves (SE), Dr C Sumnall (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr A Murray (TH), Dr M Vestergard (W), with Dr D Holburn (Senior Tutors' Committee), Ms E Attridge (CUSU), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Miss V Mills (Admissions Administrators' Group), Mr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group), Mr J Beard (CAO), Miss A Eagling (Administrative Secretary, CAO), Miss R Lister (CAO) and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

17/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr M Correia (DOW), Dr C Roughley (HH), Dr H Watson (JN), Dr S Martin (M), Revd Dr S Plant (TH), Dr M Hrebeniak (W), Dr L MacVinish (W) and Mr T Levinson (CAO).

17/02 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 November 2016 were approved as an accurate record (AF 17/01/1) subject to the clarification of the final paragraph of minute 16/160 regarding Mathematics course requirements:

The Admissions Forum **agreed** *nem con* with the proposal set out in the paper that A Level Further Maths or IB Higher Level Maths Physics or an equivalent qualification should be essential (required by all Colleges) for the Mathematical Tripos. It was **agreed** that an announcement should be added to the prospectus this year to make applicants and advisers aware of the coming change for 2019 Entry. It was further **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would organise the formation of an intercollegiate working group to further investigate the concerns raised and to monitor the impact of the changes in relation to Mathematics.

17/03 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved with the exception of item 22 vii.

17/04 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

17/05 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

i) *Medicine and Veterinary Sciences Tripos (MVST) (16/157)*

The Director of Admissions reported that the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC) had approved the recommendation to split the two Triposes.

ii) *Entrance Requirements for Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (16/158)*

The Director of Admissions reported that the proposed changes to the entrance requirements had been approved. The text within the 2018 Undergraduate

Prospectus regarding the offer level and admissions assessment for Veterinary Medicine has been changed as previously agreed.

17/06 ALTERNATIVE 'HOME' CLASSIFICATION

POLAR3, OAC and maintained sector figures for both the old and proposed new 'home' category broken down by College were received for information (AF 17/01/2). The Director of Admissions reported that the proposed new classification (based on UK domicile only) would cause some slight changes to individual Colleges, but that overall it would improve the position for POLAR and OAC targets, despite a small decrease in the maintained sector target. It was noted that the change would bring internal reporting closer to that of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

The proposal to move to the new 'home' calculation for reporting from this cycle onwards was **approved** *nem con*.

17/07 ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENTS UPDATE

A summary of 2016 registrations and non-registrations was received for information (AF 17/01/3). The Director of Admissions reported that the overall UK registration numbers were very positive, showing that the message about the new admissions assessments had been delivered clearly and effectively. The data showed that consideration would need to be given to the communication strategies for large European countries and the US in order to ensure a higher registration rate in these countries. Almost a third of applicants in the US had not registered for the assessments, and it was suggested that it would be helpful to determine the reasons behind these higher numbers.

The Admissions Assessment Steering Group (AASG) will meet on Monday 23 January and begin the review process. The Director of Admissions requested that any comments and feedback be sent to her by email, in order for these to be fed into the review process.

The meeting of the Admissions Research Steering Group (ARSG) had recently looked at the positive correlation between Section 1 results and GCSE adjusted scores, and it was noted that the Section 1 results could potentially be a good indicator for non-GCSE cohorts. The group had also considered the strong positive correlation between Section 1 results and A Level performance for post-A Level applicants. Due to the small sample sizes this correlation was only considered for those taking the Engineering Admissions Assessment (ENGAA), Natural Sciences Admissions Assessment (NSAA) and those who completed assessments that used the 36-question Reading Comprehension paper. The correlation between Maths UMS and Section 1 results is on the research schedule to be investigated.

It was requested that the number of Home applicants who had not registered for the assessments be broken down by school type.

The Admissions Forum was reminded that Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion wish to move to an at-interview assessment, as approved at the last meeting.

The Director of Admissions reported that the assessment date is usually the first Wednesday in November (so 1 November in 2017), but as this is a major Catholic holiday, many schools will be shut. The significant time constraints between the assessment registration deadline and the dispatch of assessment materials were also noted. A decision will therefore be taken in conjunction with the University of Oxford, AASG and Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing (CAAT) on the day that the assessments should take place in 2017.

The communication of assessment results was considered, and it was confirmed that the AASG would look into how to provide feedback on the assessments. It was noted that there had been a lot of questions regarding assessment results on the Student Room. The feedback which had been given so far had been kept deliberately vague and it was felt that a common protocol for giving feedback would be very helpful in order to try and ensure a level of consistency across Colleges. Whilst feedback given so far had been broad, it was observed that the giving of exact scores could not be prevented if requested by an applicant through the Data Protection Act. Basing assessment feedback on an applicant's position within the overall gathered field, giving an indication of relative performance (with 4 being the average) and making reference to it being part of a wider holistic assessment was positively discussed as an option.

It was generally felt that caution would be needed regarding the release of specific results information until it had been agreed how these are to be used by Colleges when making selection and deselection decisions. It was noted that, other than the BMAT, the ELAT results would be the only admissions assessment results given to applicants (by CAAT). One College had already received a Subject Access Request from an applicant for their assessment results. Whilst no Freedom of Information requests had yet been received regarding the results, they were to be expected. It was suggested that examples of College feedback should be made available on Moodle and it was felt that this would be helpful, particularly for new Admissions Tutors.

17/08 REVIEW OF THE ROUND

The Chair reported that, as usual, a Working Party would be convened to review matters arising from the last admissions round. A request for volunteers will be circulated by Miss Reed. The following matters had already been identified for review:

a) *Compulsory Pooling criteria for 2018*

It was **agreed** that consideration should be given to any changes which may be required to the compulsory Pooling criteria through the Review of the Round.

b) *Fee Status Questionnaire*

Changes to the Fee Status Questionnaire are urgently needed, and useful feedback received from Admissions Administrators should be fed into the review. It was **agreed** that this item should be considered through the Review of the Round.

c) *Communication of admissions decisions*

There had been some problems again this year with applicants not knowing the outcome of their application at the same time as others, particularly those taken from the Pool. A request was made at Admissions Forum last year that all applicants hear electronically at the same time; this needs to be considered again with a view to implementing in time for 2018. Regardless of this proposal, it needs to be ensured that all non-UK applicants are emailed on the communication date as previously agreed. It was suggested that this issue be taken back to the Admissions Administrators' Group for further discussion rather than being considered again through this review.

d) *Agreed posting date*

Following discussion, the suggested posting date of Thursday 11 January 2018 was **agreed**. There was no need for further review.

e) *Syrian Polonsky Scholarship applicants*

A large number of ineligible applications had been made during this cycle for the Polonsky Scholarship. The importance of joining up promotion of bursaries with entry requirements to ensure realistic applications was stressed. Even where valid applications had been made, with applicants fitting the typical qualification profile

for Cambridge, interviews were a clear barrier and it was queried whether these applications could be directed to Colleges who would be willing to interview through video conferencing. It was noted that Dr Tomlinson had made contact with the Trusts regarding this scholarship and suggested it may be better as a graduate scholarship, rather than undergraduate. The issue of advertising scholarships will be explored in more detail by the Director of Admissions and would therefore not be taken to the review.

f) *COPA deadline*

The movement of the Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA) deadline to 19 October for those applying to UCAS for the 15 October deadline had worked well. It was **agreed** that the deadline should remain unchanged. No further review is necessary.

g) *Open offers for flagged applicants*

This scheme needs to be reviewed after its first year of operation and in light of experience this year, including looking at its timings and operation. How applicants are identified in the Pool, and how they are put forward to the longlist should be reviewed, and consideration given to the suggestion of implementing multiple-flag criteria. The outcomes will also need review in the summer once examination results are known in order to assess if this scheme has achieved what was intended. It was **agreed** that the review should be undertaken by the Open Offers Working Party, rather than as part of the Review of the Round. Overall, it was felt that the scheme was a good one and feedback was mainly very positive.

h) *Raw marks and collection at Confirmation*

Due to the decreasing numbers of UMS which will be available, consideration needs to be given to whether raw marks should be collected at Confirmation. Timing needs to be considered as well as whether the grade boundaries will be published by awarding bodies in time for confirmation. Miss Reed will investigate the feasibility of this and the availability of grade boundaries as well as issue clear guidance on how the A* at A level is now achieved in reformed subjects.

The usefulness of raw marks in terms of admissions research was noted, and particularly the role it can play in the research on assessments. It was felt that the more data that is collected the better for research purposes.

It was **agreed** that raw marks and any remaining UMS would be collected this year, with the issue being revisited subsequently. The procedure for collecting raw marks will be clarified with College Admissions Offices via the Admissions Administrators' Forum once the feasibility of this has been established.

i) *Numbers managed subject moderation*

It was stressed that admissions are a College matter, even in subjects where the numbers are managed, and it is important that Colleges retain this autonomy. Consideration needs to be given to why certain subjects are numbers managed, how applicants are selected, whether these subjects are hitting their targets at Confirmation, and whether the numbers need to be reviewed. A clear steer is needed on what numbers management actually means and where the authority lies.

Numbers management needs to be considered overall, and it was noted that the University Admissions Committee (UAC) Numbers Sub-Group was also likely to be re-established.

j) *Completion of Subject Moderation Spreadsheets*

A more robust method of capturing data needs to be investigated in order to reduce errors and streamline the process, such as a central repository where data is entered only once. It was **agreed** that this item should be considered as part of the Review of the Round. One College expressed the desire for the College-specific Subject Moderation Spreadsheet to be reintroduced and Miss Reed explained why this had not been feasible this year.

It was noted that a separate review would be undertaken on the introduction of pre and at-interview admissions assessments.

Other items for general review should be brought to the Review of the Round (Miss Reed will request volunteers and request any further items for consideration in due course).

17/09 **EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION (EPQ)**

A paper summarising the qualification profile of the EPQ and detailing of the position of other Russell Group universities was received for information (AF 17/01/4). The Chair reported on the current Cambridge position, and noted the position taken on the Welsh Baccalaureate. The key difference between those taking the EPQ and the Welsh Baccalaureate is that the EPQ remains optional. Due to A Level reforms and the diminishing number of schools offering AS Levels, it was felt that the EPQ might be more commonly offered by schools in place of a fourth AS Level.

A detailed discussion took place during which various opposing views were expressed regarding the current EPQ position, and whether this needed revisiting. Concern was voiced regarding the varying availability and teaching provision, its internal, rather than external assessment, the potential for applicants from good schools to be at an advantage, and the potential for resource depletion with money being diverted toward provision for the EPQ from elsewhere, should it become a requirement.

Conversely, it was felt that it could be helpful to be able to consider the EPQ in exceptional circumstances, particularly for those not doing 3 A Levels, or those where their project is specifically related to that subject, especially if it is not covered within the A Level syllabus. The view was expressed that being able to consider the EPQ in these circumstances would give an extra level of flexibility for applicants at Confirmation. It was further noted that supporting the EPQ could lead to pressure being put on the Government to support its provision.

Three Colleges voted in favour of no change in relation to the current position with the EPQ, and after further consideration it was **agreed** that the position should be updated as follows, and included in the 2019 Undergraduate Prospectus:

We welcome the Extended Project and would encourage applicants to undertake one as it will help to develop independent study and research skills valuable for higher education. However, we recognise that not all students have equal opportunity to access them and so completion of an Extended Project will not normally be a requirement of any offer made.

17/10 **CORE MATHS**

A paper was received for consideration (AF 17/01/5). The Chair highlighted the proposed wording on the Core Maths qualification. It was remarked that GCSE Maths is not currently endorsed within the entry requirements, and it would therefore be peculiar to endorse Core Maths.

Concerns were raised that those who would take Maths A Level may downgrade to this lower level qualification, and that funding for Core Maths could have implications for long term funding of A Level Further Maths.

It was suggested that Core Maths be treated in a similar manner to the EPQ; it is a good qualification but not one which would normally form part of the offer. It is certainly not a suitable replacement for subjects that require A Level Maths, but could be looked at favourably as extended numeracy for humanities subjects such as Psychological and Behavioural Sciences. Concern was raised over the ambiguity of the second sentence of the proposed form of words.

The proposal was **approved** in principle, and it was **agreed** that the wording would be clarified by the Student Recruitment and Information team in Cambridge Admissions Office (CAO) before publication on the Study Cam website.

17/11 UNDER-AGE ADMISSIONS POLICY

Proposed revised wording for the under-age admissions policy was received for consideration (AF 17/01/6). Mr Beard reported that the additional wording reflected discussion at the November Admissions Forum whereby the Faculty or Department is to be consulted regarding students who will be under 16 on entry, and notified where students will be 16 or 17. It was confirmed that these discussions held with Faculties or Departments would focus on what adjustments would need to be put in place in order to ensure appropriate adjustments are considered, not whether to admit the student. It was suggested that the wording be reinforced to stress that Colleges are the final decision makers on which applicants to admit.

The need for practical details was raised, and it was noted that a list of contacts in the different Faculties and Departments would be required.

Once the wording has been clarified as outlined above, it was agreed that this proposal should be referred to the Senior Tutors' Committee for approval.

17/12 VETERINARY MEDICINE GATEWAYS PROGRAMME

The Director of Admissions reported that, following an application in October, it had come to light that the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) website states that their Veterinary Medicine Gateways Programme students applying to Cambridge are guaranteed an interview. The applicant in question was also under the impression that they were exempt from taking the BMAT.

It was noted that this programme was discussed by the Admissions Forum in June 2010. Miss Reed had contacted the RVC in order to investigate the details of this agreement further and was awaiting information.

There were concerns about this type of agreement with any kind of Gateway programme, and the precedent this agreement could set.

It was **agreed** that this item would be brought back to a future meeting, once more information was available, and that a decision would need to be taken whether Gateways applicants should be required to sit the Natural Sciences Admissions Assessment.

17/13 UCAS EMBARGO BREACHES

Mr Beard reported that within the past three years there had been two breaches of the UCAS examination results embargo. The Chief Executive Officer of UCAS had recently written to all University Vice-Chancellors indicating that they would operate a zero tolerance approach to breaches across the sector in the future, with penalties for

breaching the embargo likely to be serious - potentially financial, or more likely the withholding of results until A Level publication day.

Whilst both breaches had been relatively minor and accidental, UCAS is increasingly concerned with the number of breaches across the sector. Measures need to be taken to ensure breaches are avoided in the future. Neither of the breaches had been the fault of the College Admissions Offices, and it was noted that individuals from outside the Offices were not necessarily as aware of the very strict rules around the release of embargoed examination results.

This issue had been discussed by the Admissions Administrators' Group (AAG) which had come up with two suggestions. Firstly, that the Senior Tutor or Admissions Tutor from each College sign an embargo agreement similar to that signed by the University at the behest of UCAS each year. Secondly, that results are not shared with anyone outside of College Admissions Offices before results day, to ensure only those who directly need to know the results in order to make decisions have access.

Whilst the first suggestion was **approved**, it was noted that the second suggestion may prove particularly problematic in some Colleges. Admissions Tutors often need to seek advice from Directors of Studies during this period; despite already having to wait until Thursday morning to get UMS results from schools in order to make decisions on near miss applicants. It was felt by some that the number of near misses was underestimated and that this approach could lead to an increase in the number of calls from applicants who log on to UCAS Track on A Level publication day and see their place is yet to be confirmed. Decisions need to be taken quickly so as to aid those candidates who need to make use of UCAS Clearing. An alternative solution would be for Directors of Studies to be required to physically visit the Admissions Office in order to discuss applicants, thus eliminating results being emailed and potentially forwarded on by accident.

It was **agreed** that it would be helpful for Miss Reed to send a reminder to be forwarded on to Directors of Studies and others regarding the implications of a breach of the UCAS embargo and the very strict conditions UCAS place on universities during this important point in the admissions process. The issue could then be dealt with at a collegiate level.

It was noted that the embargo also covered any communication with schools and colleges, a fact that some schools and colleges appeared to regularly overlook. Miss Reed explained that whilst schools and colleges are reminded by UCAS of the embargo that institutions have to abide by, those schools and colleges are not subject to any agreement directly with UCAS, which means it is difficult for UCAS to police. It had been suggested by the AAG that a statement should be added to the near-miss offer letter stressing that Colleges would not enter into any discussions regarding results until A Level publication day. It was also suggested that adding a similar statement to College email replies at this time of year, might be helpful. Both suggestions were considered useful.

It was **agreed** that this item should also be referred to the Music Awards Working Party in order to confirm with Choir Directors that details of acceptances cannot be communicated until after the embargo is lifted.

17/14 **CHONJI: SOUTH KOREAN STUDENT REFERENCES**

Mr Beard reported on the practice of referees requiring payment in order to write references for applicants. There was concern that this could be a common practice in other countries as well as South Korea, as a number of references each year are written by an individual not obviously related to where the student is studying. Whilst

such claims would be difficult to validate, Colleges should be mindful of the practice when reading references.

Whilst applicants can indicate on their UCAS application that they have agreed with the institutions to which they are applying that they need not to submit a UCAS reference, it was felt that a strong statement was needed that if applicants are unable to source an appropriate reference without paying for it then they should contact the College to which they are applying in the first instance.

It was therefore **agreed** that a form of words should be added to the Undergraduate Prospectus to strengthen the commitment to not accepting this practice.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial to understand more about the role agencies play in the preparation of applications in different parts of the world, and Mr Beard offered to gather any information available.

17/15 INDIA INTERVIEW SCHEME

A proposal for an India interview scheme pilot was received for consideration (AF 17/01/7). Mr Beard reported on the proposal and outlined experiences of the previous interviewing schemes in this country. It was reported that India is strategically important to the University for a number of reasons, including research collaboration, so it is unusual that there is not more engagement at the undergraduate level. The proposed scheme would fit well within the wider Indian strategy, and would hopefully increase the number of well qualified undergraduate applicants to the University. The aim is to remove an obstacle for Indian students applying to Cambridge

A recent visit to India was keenly received and it appears that not all applicants need a full scholarship. Some just want the prestige of receiving an award. The University is currently looking at how to fundraise for scholarships. Pledges for two part scholarships have already been secured through Indian Selwyn alumni. The University is establishing a Section 8 company in India; this will allow individuals and companies to make donations to the University for projects in India and at the same time secure tax relief. It is thought that this will make giving in India easier and more attractive, particularly for companies that have to expend a proportion of their product on social responsibility projects.

Since a Selwyn alumnus is prepared to underwrite a significant proportion of the cost of the interview scheme (making it cost neutral, when taken with the interview fee charged) it is expected that Selwyn will wish to contribute several members to the interview team which goes out.

Consideration was given as to whether remote interviewing might be a better option longer term, though some interviews, for example Engineering, would probably continue to be undertaken in person. It was noted that the use of remote interviewing, and the circumstances in which it is used, is part of a wider discussion taking place.

There is a need to check the Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing coverage in India, but it was felt that if Cambridge is seen as a realistic option schools would likely open themselves up to administering the assessments.

The proposal was **approved** and Mr Beard agreed to investigate the potential timing of the interviews as soon as possible so that a decision can be made on the application deadline for the forthcoming round. The need to be clear on qualification restrictions was raised and it was noted that the Overseas Qualifications Reference Group will be reviewing Indian qualifications at its next meeting.

17/16 CAMBRIDGE TRUST UNDERGRADUATE SELECTION COMMITTEE

The Chair reported on the need for volunteers to serve on the Cambridge Trust Undergraduate Selection Committee. One member from the School of Biological Sciences, three members from the School of Physical Sciences and one member from the School of Technology were requested.

It was noted that a retired former Admissions Tutor had offered to serve on the committee again, and no concerns were raised.

Volunteers were asked to contact Miss Eagling.

17/17 ADMISSIONS FORUM WORKING PARTY ON OVERSEAS INTERVIEWS MEMBERSHIP

The Director of Admissions reported on the need for two Admissions Tutors to serve for three years on the Working Party on Overseas Interviews. This year's meeting is set for 2pm until 3:30pm on Tuesday 7 February at the Cambridge Admissions Office.

Volunteers were asked to contact Miss Eagling.

17/18 SUMMER POOL 2017

It was noted that the Summer Pool will take place on Friday 18 August at Newnham College.

17/19 WINTER POOL 2018

The proposed timescale for the 2018 Winter Pool was received for consideration and **approved** (AF 17/01/8).

17/20 MEDIA UPDATE

A report from Dr Almeroth-Williams was received for information (AF 17/01/9). Dr Almeroth-Williams highlighted matters of interest including regional differences in progression to Oxbridge, the cost of studying at Cambridge, and the fall in EU applications.

A statement had been given following the announcement by the University of Bristol regarding the lowering of its offers for local disadvantaged applicants. It was noted that a more robust response may be necessary for a future meeting with a Bristol MP.

The Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (NEACO) had been announced and had received the most attention out of any region, with coverage being positive.

There had been no national enquiries regarding the admissions assessments since the last report. There had been some Student Press interest but it was too early to provide statements at this time.

A freelance journalist request had been received for information on the variance of attainment once at Cambridge. The difference being so small between Widening Participation students and non-Widening Participation students, no story had come of it.

17/21 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS

A summary of FOI requests recently serviced by CAO was received for information (AF 17/01/10).

17/22 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Information and Publications Sub Group held on 14 November 2016* (AF 17/01/11)
- ii) *Admissions Director of Studies in Engineering held on 14 November 2016* (AF 17/01/12)
- iii) *Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 16 November 2016* (AF 17/01/13)
- iv) *Admissions Administrators' Group held on 24 November 2016* (AF 17/01/14)
- v) *Outreach Steering Group held on 25 November 2016* (AF 17/01/15)
- vi) *Schools and Colleges Liaison Officers' Group held on 28 November 2016* (AF 17/01/16)
- vii) *International Admissions and Recruitment Working Group held on 30 November 2016* (AF 17/01/17)

Attention was drawn to minute 2.(b) regarding remote interviews. It was clarified that the Toronto Interview Team also saw some Arts and Humanities applicants, not just those students applying for science subjects from the US.

17/23 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- i) *A* reformed A Level grade*
A query was raised regarding what constitutes an A* in the reformed A Levels. Miss Reed agreed to investigate this and report back to the Colleges.
- ii) *Digitalisation of the Winter Pool*
Thanks were expressed to Miss Reed and the Admissions and Data Services team at the Cambridge Admissions Office for their hard work on the Winter Pool. It was suggested that the possibility of digitalising the Winter Pool in the future should be explored.

17/24 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 24 February 2017 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2016/17 have been agreed as:

Friday 28 April 2017

Friday 2 June 2017

Wednesday 16 August 2017

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

AE/HR/CAO/27.01.17

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 24 February 2017** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, MUR), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions, N), Dr A Bond (CAI), Dr S Houghton-Walker (CAI), Dr P Wingfield (CAI), Dr E Tomlinson (CHR), Dr A Barbrook (CHU), Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr P Howell (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr S Davis (G), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr M Steinfeld (HH), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr H Watson (JN), Dr O Spivack (LC), Dr J Munns (M), Dr C Burt (PEM), Mr S Mandelbrote (PET), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr S Eves (SE), Dr C Sumnall (SID), Dr G Rangwala (T), Revd Dr S Plant (TH), with Dr D Holburn (Senior Tutors' Committee), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Miss V Mills (Admissions Administrators' Group), Mr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group), and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

17/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr D Bainbridge (CTH), Dr M Correia (DOW), Dr M Gemelos (ED), Dr N Rutter (JE), Dr V Harvey (LC), Dr S Martin (M), Professor A Poole (T), Dr A Murray (TH), Dr M Hrebeniak (W), Dr L MacVinish (W), Ms E Attridge (CUSU), Mr J Beard (CAO), Miss A Eagling (Administrative Secretary, CAO), Mr T Levinson (CAO) and Miss R Lister (CAO).

17/26 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 January 2017 were approved as an accurate record (AF 17/02/1).

17/27 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved.

17/28 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

17/29 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA*i) Syrian Polonsky Scholarship applicants (minute 17/08e)*

The Director of Admissions reported on a recent meeting with the Cambridge Trust. The challenges with the Polonsky Scholarship were discussed and it was agreed that earlier engagement is needed in future, to avoid some of the issues that arose during Michaelmas Term. It was reported that there had been no successful Polonsky scholarship applications in this cycle and it was suggested that this particular scholarship may be more suitable for graduate students.

ii) India Interview Scheme (minute 17/15)

Miss Reed reported that the composition of the India interview team was now complete with Dr Marta Correia and Professor Gopal Madabhushi both kindly agreeing to join. It was further reported that Professor Madabhushi is currently trying to source a suitable venue for these interviews in Mumbai.

17/30 MINUTES FROM THE WORKING PARTY ON OVERSEAS INTERVIEWS

The minutes from the Working Party on Overseas Interviews and an initial list of proposed overseas interviewers for 2017/18 were received (AF 17/02/2a,b). The Director of Admissions reported on the pressures on interview capacity in Hong Kong and the request from the Working Party that the expansion of this scheme be explored. It was noted that there were many strong applicants who were not selected for interview in Hong Kong and instead were required to travel to Cambridge for interview. The termination of the Australia interview scheme has also increased the number of Hong Kong interview requests,

especially since the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) examinations clash with the Singapore interview dates, so this is not a viable alternative option for many applicants. The proposal to expand the Hong Kong interview team with an additional interviewer was **approved**. It was **agreed** that it would be ideal if the additional interviewer could be a Lawyer.

The Director of Admissions reported on the Hong Kong University (HKU) scheme. It was noted that this scheme is highly successful, with a number of highly attaining students admitted to Cambridge to read Engineering each year. The scheme is mutually beneficial since it significantly bolsters HKU's recruitment. It was reported that HKU had recently suggested that their students come to Cambridge after two years of study, rather than one (thus joining Part 1B of the Engineering Tripos). HKU students are sometimes only 16 years of age when they begin their studies, so coming to Cambridge after two years could be beneficial in this regard.

A query was raised on whether there was a potential for reputational risk in allying with one particular university, especially since there are other very good institutions within this region. The Director of Admissions stressed that such applicants were not guaranteed an offer and still had to go through the same application process as all others, but concurred that this was something to be mindful of.

The similarities with affiliated applications was also pointed out and it was noted that it might be difficult to justify why HKU students can come to Cambridge after two years of study, when applicants from other institutions would be required to complete three or four years of study before being admitted. The matter will be explored further and a formal proposal will be brought to Admissions Forum for approval.

The recommendation to continue for a further year with the remote interviewing pilot in New York was **approved**. It was stressed that the Study Cam website would need to be very clear on which Colleges are participating in this scheme in order for applicants to make an informed decision on where to apply. It was **agreed** that Colleges should also make this clear on their own websites.

The proposal to open up Toronto interviews to non-Canadian applicants was **approved** and it was noted that this would open up the possibility of applicants from the Americas being seen in Canada. It was noted that Canadian applicants would still be prioritised in this scheme. It was reported that there was no plan to increase interviewer capacity in Canada this coming year, but this may be reviewed for future years.

The list of overseas interviewers for the 2018 admissions cycle was **approved** (including the additions of Dr Correia and Professor Madabhushi for India). It was reported that there is still a vacancy for an Engineer to join the Singapore/Malaysia/China team as well as the additional Law interviewer to join the Hong Kong team.

17/31 **ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENTS UPDATE**

i) *Admissions Assessment Steering Group*

The minutes of the Admissions Assessment Steering Group held on 23 January 2017 were received (AF 17/02/3). Attention was drawn to minute 7 regarding the publication of exemplar admissions assessments. The Director of Admissions reported publication of exemplar admissions assessments would need to be complete by the end of March in order to coincide with all of the other important information updates that happen at this time. It was **agreed** that this information should be published for potential applicants, and that the original specification should be used, unless the original rubric is changing for the coming year, in which case the revised specification should be used in order to avoid misleading applicants.

ii) *Admissions Assessment Review*

The Director of Admissions reported that a review is currently underway and the deadline for feedback is 28 February. Preliminary research has already been conducted primarily focussing on the relationship between Section 1 scores and GCSE, with further research scheduled to take place when more information becomes available.

iii) *2017 Assessment date*

It was reported that the assessment date for 2017 would be Thursday 2 November. The provision of information to Colleges would be on a similar timetable to 2016.

iv) *Non-registrations*

Additional analysis of home school type and deselection non-registration data was received, along with a paper outlining the plans to increase registrations (AF 17/02/4a,b). The Director of Admissions reported that a high proportion of non-registration applications had been deselected, which suggested that these applicants were academically weaker anyway (since it had been agreed that failure to register for the assessment would not be a reason for deselection in the first year).

The Director of Admissions highlighted the plan for targeted communications in order to increase the registration rate in this coming cycle. It was noted that even a well-established test like the BMAT had non-registrations in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, so it would be unrealistic to expect a 100% registration rate.

A query on how to support applicants from countries that do not send many applications to Cambridge and who also fail to register for the assessments was raised. It was agreed that this can be particularly problematic, especially when the costs associated with applying to Cambridge can be prohibitive. It was **agreed** that this matter should be monitored and that British Councils and Embassies might be asked to offer support.

17/32 ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE (RVC) GATEWAY PROGRAMME

A proposal from Dr Bainbridge was received for consideration (AF 17/02/5). The Director of Admissions reported on the proposal to formally withdraw from the Gateway Programme arrangement with the Royal Veterinary College. It was **agreed** that this scheme is likely to do students a disservice, especially given the high level of scientific content within the Veterinary Medicine Tripos. It was **agreed** that Cambridge should withdraw from this scheme and instead focus effort on other widening participation activities.

17/33 FOUNDATION YEAR RECOMMENDATIONS

A proposal was received for consideration (AF 17/02/6). The Director of Admissions reported on the two potential curriculum structures for a Cambridge Foundation Year Programme (FYP), specifically a Certificate of Higher Education in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, to be provided by the Institute for Continuing Education (ICE) with partner Colleges, faculties and departments.

It is proposed that the University develops a full time Certificate of Higher Education in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, as a means to attract students from low participation backgrounds, and also develop a summer bridging programme to serve the needs of students who require a shorter period of study.

The Director of Admissions confirmed that the Foundation Year Programme was not aimed at the overseas market and that mature students are an obvious target group. It was stressed that the programme will aim to address an opportunity deficit, rather than an attainment deficit. It was noted that there are some opportunities to raise funding for this programme and the aim is to make it available free of charge to those selected on to it. The estimated cost for a three year pilot is thought to be around £2.5 million.

The proposal to move to the next stage of the project and conduct some market research was **approved**. It was noted that, in conducting such research, these plans may get into the public domain. However, if the outcome of the market research is positive then the group will seek University and College approval for implementation of the programme.

It was suggested that Architecture might usefully be added to the list of subjects the programme could cover since there are significant access issues with this subject. It was felt that this would be worth thinking about for future development.

17/34 COMPUTER SCIENCE WITH MATHEMATICS ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

The Director of Admissions reported on a request from Computer Science, specifically that, in line with the recent changes to the entrance requirements for Mathematics, those applying to read Computer Science with Mathematics are now required to have A Level Further Mathematics/IB Higher Level Physics. This request was **approved**.

The Chair reported that the Admissions Forum had previously agreed to review the move from A*AA to A*A*A for the sciences (except Psychology and Behavioural Sciences (and more recently Veterinary Medicine)). It was **agreed**, however, that a broader review was unnecessary at this point.

17/35 ACCESS AGREEMENT 2018-19

The Director of Admissions reported on a constructive meeting with Professor Les Ebdon (Director of Fair Access to Higher Education). Professor Ebdon had provided clarification on distinctions between reportable and countable activities. It was reported that thought is now being given to what other targets might be considered, for example Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), income-based criteria, or a regional target.

The Director of Admissions reported that Professor Ebdon sees Cambridge as having made good progress towards the targets we currently have.

The Director of Admissions provided an update on the current position with regard to OFFA targets. Maintained sector offers are at 66.2%, POLAR3 Quintiles 1 and 2 offers are at 12.4% and OAC offers are at 10.9%. Although pleasing from a maintained sector and OAC perspective, the POLAR3 position is likely to come in below the agreed target for this year (11.5%). It was noted that the conversion rate from offer to acceptance during the summer may not reflect previous years given the A Level qualification reforms and more misses are likely.

17/36 REGIONAL TEACHER BRIEFINGS

A proposal from the Teacher Engagement Strategy Group was received for consideration (AF 17/02/7). The Chair reported on the request for the reintroduction of these events. It was reported that one of the main reasons for these ending originally was owing to the high turnover of Schools Liaison Officer staff. It was agreed that these events should be re-established, but that they should be embedded in the Teacher Engagement Strategy Group and a standing item should be brought to the Schools and Colleges Liaison Officers' Group each term with a report on which briefings have been conducted, in order to help maintain momentum.

17/37 HE+ PROGRESS UPDATE

A paper providing an update on current HE+ progress and outlining the criteria looked for in successful consortia was received for information (AF 17/02/8).

17/38 CONNECT TO CAMBRIDGE

A proposal was received for approval (AF 17/02/9). The Director of Admissions reported on a proposal to establish a steering group to oversee the Connect to Cambridge Scheme, especially since it is very broad and there is potential overlap with the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (NEACO). The importance of ensuring 'join-up' in order to avoid pulling in different directions and wasting resources was stressed. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would convene a group with appropriate membership to

maintain oversight of Connect to Cambridge projects, to identify other stakeholders, and to ensure that local regional events are connected strategically. It was further **agreed** that it would be helpful for an update on the NEACO work to be provided at a forthcoming meeting of Admissions Forum.

17/39 **DECLINED OFFER ANALYSIS**

Analysis of the number of declined offers for the 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 cycles was received for information (AF 17/02/10).

17/40 **CONFIRMATION REJECT ANALYSIS**

Analysis of the number of applicants rejected at Confirmation for the 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 cycles was received for information (AF 17/02/11).

17/41 **MINUTES FROM THE WORKING PARTY ON THE REVIEW OF THE ROUND**

The minutes from the Working Party on the Review of the Round were received (AF 17/02/12). The following matters were discussed:

i) Compulsory Pooling Criteria for 2018

The Director of Admissions reported that compulsory pooling had been considered by the group. It had been agreed that it was premature to have an admissions assessment criterion, but this may be considered again next year once more data is available and further research has been conducted. It was noted that further analysis looking at those interviewed but not placed in the Winter Pool will be conducted in CAO before a recommendation is made to Admissions Forum. It was noted that Engineering had again reported that there were a large number of unrealistic applicants with Scottish qualifications in the Winter Pool and it was **agreed** that CAO would investigate this.

ii) Fee Status Questionnaire

The recommendation to only send the Fee Status Questionnaire out to those applying for Medicine in advance of offers was discussed. It was noted that the Admissions Administrators had considered this at their meeting the day before, and had expressed a number of contrasting views. The issue of timing and overseas applicants applying for Cambridge Trust funding was potentially problematic. It was **agreed** that a small working group should be convened to discuss the issues raised in more detail. It was noted that the Office of Intercollegiate Services (OIS) should also be consulted.

iii) Raw Marks

The recommendation that the guidance be updated to state that Uniform Marks Scale scores (UMS) should be entered for all Welsh and Northern Irish A Levels, and for all Maths A Levels in England (as well as post-qualification applicants who took their A Levels before the reforms) was **approved**. It was also **agreed** that the guidance should clearly state that raw marks and scores should **not** be entered on the Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ)/Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA). It was noted that Concord College produces 'EUMS' for all of their students. Whilst applicants would be asked not to enter such information on their SAQ/COPA, it could still be sent directly to Colleges should they wish. It was agreed that Miss Reed would check the situation with regard to the availability of raw marks, specifically if they will be available to applicants, as well as their schools/colleges.

iv) Completion of Subject Moderation Spreadsheets

It was reported that the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets, as currently configured, would need to be retained for at least another year. Whilst the CamSIS Improvement Programme may ultimately help with a more streamlined system, it is still some way off. CAO will investigate whether it is possible for Admissions Tutors to be given global access to all subject-specific Directors of Studies Moodle sites. The importance of ensuring Admissions Tutors are given access to all information was stressed, and it was **agreed** that it was vital that the master copy of each spreadsheet was held in only one place. Enhanced training and support will also be given to Subject Convenors.

The Director of Admissions reported she was currently collecting final versions of all Subject Moderation Spreadsheets and will pass on the Section 2 admissions assessment results to CAO for research purposes. If there are gaps, then Colleges will be contacted directly.

v) *Protocol for College Websites*

It was **agreed** that a Working Group to propose protocols for the ways in which Colleges describe themselves on their websites should be convened. This group should also consider how Colleges who differ from the norm, where their standard admissions policies are not the same as the collegiate University, present this information, and how they market themselves externally. Volunteers were asked to contact Miss Reed as soon as possible.

vi) *Deselection of Mature Students*

The deselection of mature applicants was discussed. This is a complex issue and further analysis is required to ascertain whether or not there are large numbers of viable mature applicants being deselected. It was reported that there has been a downturn in the number of mature learners applying to higher education nationally, which may have compounded the perception that fewer mature applicants are being pooled. Colleges were reminded of the importance of consulting with their link mature College before deselecting mature applicants; the need for a prompt response when advice is sought was also stressed. It was **agreed** that guidance for Colleges should be enhanced to make this process clear.

The possibility of mature applicants being transferred pre-pool was discussed but serious concerns were raised with this suggestion. It was broadly felt that it would be more appropriate for colleagues from the mature Colleges to help with the interviews of such applicants at the standard age Colleges. It was **agreed** that this matter should be referred to the Mature Strategy Group for detailed discussion.

vii) *Electronic Interview Report Forms*

Electronic interview report forms had been discussed by the Working Party. It was noted that it would not be possible for a fully electronic solution to be in place for the coming admissions round, but it is hoped that suitable functionality will be developed in due course. It was **agreed** that Miss Reed would make available an electronic version of the interview report form that is compatible with Mac technology in time for the coming round.

viii) *'The Student Room' Feedback*

It was reported that feedback from 'The Student Room' indicated that some interviewees had been able to hear the interview ahead of them when sat outside the interview room. It was **agreed** that, as a minimum, Colleges should ensure that interview rooms are soundproof. Best practice would be to have a collective waiting room, though it was acknowledged that this is not always practical.

Colleges were reminded of the longstanding agreement to provide accommodation and essential meals (dinner and breakfast) free of charge when an overnight stay is required of interviewees. There was some ambiguity over whether or not lunch should also be provided. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions should also raise this matter at the Senior Tutors' Committee.

ix) *Feedback to Referees and associated Data Protection Issues*

Provision of feedback to applicants was discussed. It was **agreed** that, when requested, feedback should be provided in an individualised format rather than just a generic statement. It was **agreed** that if applicants specifically request feedback to be provided directly to them, rather than via their school/college, then this should be provided in that way. Concerns were raised by some Colleges over the increasing number of requests for feedback and it was noted that there are times when schools/colleges make the request without the applicant's knowledge. Feedback has also been requested from successful applicants, which places further pressure on Colleges. It was **agreed** that feedback on any

admissions assessment performance (which should only be provided in broad terms) should only be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

It was noted that there are data protection issues to be considered with the provision of feedback and this would be considered alongside other data protection matters.

It was **agreed** that a sensible final date for notification of the outcome of applications placed in the Winter Pool should be identified in time for the forthcoming round. It was noted that Admissions Administrators would also look again at communicating the outcome of all non-Winter Pool applications at the same time, also in preparation for the forthcoming round.

x) Applicant Photo

The applicant photo had been discussed by the Working Party. It was noted that Miss Reed would investigate the technical feasibility of including the photo on the interview report form, rather than on the Cambridge Applicant Print Out (CAPO). Further consideration of this matter will then follow.

xi) Timings of calls to interview

The recommendation to call only very strong overseas (non-EU) applicants for interview in advance of the assessment results being released was discussed in detail. It was noted that a number of applicants had failed to get visas in time to come to interview this year and this had been problematic, particularly in the case of overseas Medicine applicants. Concerns were expressed about the challenges for scheduling, and also the message this sends if certain groups of applicants are called for interview ahead of others. It was noted, however, that those applicants interviewed in China, Malaysia and Singapore are already advised of their interview in advance of admissions assessment results being known. Views for and against the proposal were expressed. It was **agreed** that any applicant who meets the compulsory pooling criteria can be called for interview early, at the College's discretion.

xii) Consideration of Joint Tripos applicants for a single Tripos

The Working Party had considered whether or not to ask joint Tripos applicants if they would wish to be considered for a single Tripos subject before interview. It was **agreed** that such applicants should not be asked this question, but instead Subject Convenors would highlight strong applicants who may be of interest to the single Triposes in the Winter Pool.

xiii) Discussion of interview questions

Some schools expressed concern about applicants being expected to agree not to discuss their interview, including the questions asked, for a period of at least 36 months. It was **agreed** that this requirement was draconian and needed to be reviewed.

xiv) Two dimensional interview score scale

The Working Party had considered a request from the Mathematics Undergraduate Admissions Committee regarding the implementation of a two dimensional interview score scale, looking at both competency and potential. This request did not have the support of the Working Party and therefore would not be taken forward.

17/42 WINTER POOL VENUE

It was noted that the 2017 Winter Pool will take place at Homerton College.

17/43 ANNUAL ADMISSIONS BRIEFING

It was noted that the Annual Admissions Briefing will take place on Friday 29 September 2017. A request was made for a host College, with volunteers asked to email Miss Reed as soon as possible.

17/44 MEDIA UPDATE

A report from Dr Almeroth-Williams was received for information (AF 17/02/13). Dr Almeroth-Williams drew attention to a number of items in his report.

He reported on the Channel 4 documentary produced by Swan Films and featuring the rapper and television presenter 'Professor Green'. It was noted that the release of the UCAS equality data had generated a number of newspaper enquiries, all of which taking a different stance on the data. Dr Almeroth-Williams also drew attention to the recent HESA statistics.

It was noted that there had been a number of FOI requests regarding ethnicity recently and Colleges were advised to continue liaising with the Director of Admissions and Dr Almeroth-Williams on these.

It was **agreed** that the open offer scheme could be a good opportunity for a positive news story in August.

17/45 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS

A summary of FOI requests recently serviced by CAO was received for information (AF 17/02/14).

17/46 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *Colleges' Outreach Monitoring Group held on 10 January 2017* (AF 17/02/15)
- ii) *Outreach Steering Group held on 12 January 2017* (AF 17/02/16)
- iii) *Teacher Engagement Strategy Group held on 19 January 2017* (AF 17/02/17)
- iv) *Admissions Research Steering Group held on 20 January 2017* (AF 17/02/18)
Attention was drawn to minute 9 regarding analysis comparing Admissions Assessment Section 1 scores with applicants' GCSE and A Level results.
- v) *Schools and Colleges Liaison Officers' Group held on 23 January 2017* (AF 17/02/19)
- vi) *CamSIS Special Interest Group held on 26 January 2017* (AF 17/02/20)
Dr Sutherland highlighted the CamSIS Improvement Programme and requested volunteers for an Admissions Tutor to join the group.
- vii) *Admissions Directors of Studies in Engineering held on 27 January 2017* (AF 17/02/21)
- viii) *Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 30 January 2017* (AF 17/02/22)
- ix) *Colleges' Outreach Monitoring Group held on 1 February 2017* (AF 17/02/23)
- x) *Mature Strategy Group held on 3 February 2017* (AF 17/02/24)
Attention was drawn to minute 4.16i regarding the clarity of information in relation to the Access Diploma qualification. It was noted that these qualifications are currently considered acceptable for arts and social sciences courses (except Economics), but not acceptable for science courses (except Psychology and Behavioural Sciences). The challenges with assessing the suitability of these qualifications for a subject like Law were raised. It was **agreed** that comments should be sent to Dr Tomlinson who would ensure these are fed into the discussions of the Mature Strategy Group which has the experience to offer advice, though, as she pointed out, such diplomas were relevant to every College, whether mature or standard age.

17/47 ANY OTHER BUSINESS*i) Alternative Flexible Admissions Offer for the Mathematical Tripos*

A proposal was received for consideration (AF 17/02/25). The Director of Admissions reported on the details of the proposal and a number of initial concerns were expressed. It was clarified that, even if an alternative offer is made, such applicants would still be required to take both STEP papers.

It was felt that further careful consideration of this proposal was needed, especially given its complexity. It was noted this could also have a knock on effect on other subjects and therefore could not be implemented in time for the forthcoming admissions round.

It was **agreed** that this matter should be brought back to the next meeting of the Admissions Forum for detailed discussion.

ii) Early BMAT sitting

The Director of Admissions reported on a suggestion from Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing (CAAT) to pilot an early sitting of the BMAT, run through centres rather than schools, where candidates would have their results before the application deadline. It was noted that other Medical Schools were keen to trial this for this coming admissions round. The Director of Admissions confirmed that applicants would not be able to sit the BMAT twice in one cycle. Given the pilot would be going ahead regardless, and applicants would not be permitted to sit the test twice, it was **agreed** that Cambridge should also participate in this to avoid restricting the applicant field.

17/48 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 28 April 2017 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

The dates for 2016/17 have been agreed as:

Friday 2 June 2017

Wednesday 16 August 2017

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

University of Cambridge

ADMISSIONS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Admissions Forum held on **Friday 28 April** in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** starting at **2.00pm**

Present: Mr S Watts (Chair), Dr A Spencer (Deputy Chair, MUR), Dr S Lucy (Director of Admissions, N), Dr A Bond (CAI), Dr S Houghton-Walker (CAI), Dr E Tomlinson (CHR), Dr A Barbrook (CHU), Dr N Cutler (CHU), Dr R Partington (CHU), Dr K McDougall (CL), Dr M Sutherland (CC), Dr D Bainbridge (CTH), Dr M Tomalin (DOW), Dr M Gemelos (ED), Dr C Crawford (EM), Dr H Canuto (F), Dr S Owen (F), Dr S Davis (G), Dr J Riley (G), Dr P Elliott (HO), Dr C Roughley (HH), Dr B Post (JE), Dr H Watson (JN), Dr F Hernandez (K), Dr V Harvey (LC), Dr J Munns (M), Dr C Burt (PEM), Mr S Mandelbrote (PET), Dr A Thompson (Q), Dr D Woodman (R), Dr D Beauregard (SE), Dr C Sumnall (SID), Professor A Poole (T), Dr A Murray (TH), Revd Dr S Plant (TH), Dr L MacVinish (W), with Dr D Holburn (Senior Tutors' Committee), Ms E Attridge (CUSU), Dr T Almeroth-Williams (Office of Communications), Miss V Mills (Admissions Administrators' Group), Mr J Beard (CAO), Miss A Eagling (Administrative Secretary, CAO), Miss R Lister (CAO) and Miss H Reed (Secretary, CAO).

17/49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr M Correia (DOW), Dr C Burlinson (JE), Dr S Martin (M), Dr M Hrebeniak (W), Dr M Thompson (Schools Liaison Officers' Group) and Mr T Levinson (CAO).

17/50 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 February 2017 were approved as an accurate record (AF 17/03/1).

17/51 APPROVAL OF STARRED ITEMS

The starred items were approved.

17/52 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

17/53 MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

i) Under-age admissions policy (minute 17/11)

The Director of Admissions reported that the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC) had approved this policy and that its minutes had since been received by the General Board of Education Committee (GBEC). GBEC had approved the policy, subject to clarification that medical students were required to be 18 years of age by the end of the Michaelmas Term in which they matriculated. The Committee also agreed that, as admitting under-age students required Faculties and Departments to undertake risk assessments and due diligence, and also had potential visa implications, the wording should be revised to make it clear that Faculties and Departments should be 'fully consulted' before an offer was made. These revisions were **approved** by the Admissions Forum.

ii) A reformed A Level grade (minute 17/23 i)*

A paper was received for information (AF 17/03/2). The Chair reported on the numerical system of setting grades for the new linear A Levels and that the A* would be set in the same way as the other grades. The proportion of applicants being awarded each grade will be no different as exam boards will determine grade boundaries based on the proportion of students awarded the grade in previous years. Projections will be made statistically rather than arithmetically. Whilst there was concern that the A* grade will not be checked by Senior Examiners this year, it was noted that this is no different to practice in previous years.

17/54 MEDIA UPDATE

A report from Dr Almeroth-Williams was received for information (AF 17/03/3). Dr Almeroth-Williams reported on two key ongoing activities.

A commercial company, Crimson Education, has been selling admissions advice which is freely available from the University. The company has a subsidiary, Crimson Hub, which has been contacting College JCRs and convincing students to take part in interviews on film, without revealing the commercial connection. Whilst there are no concerns over this content, Crimson Hub has since started contacting Colleges, requesting permission to film on College grounds. They have also contacted the University Library. Colleges and Faculties have been advised to decline these requests, so as not to be seen endorsing these films, because of the commercial connection. As far as is known, no Cambridge academic has taken part in any of these films. A statement is available to be used and adapted when responding to these requests, and it was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would circulate this in advance of further requests being received. It was suggested that undergraduate students should be made aware of this as they are likely to be approached, and it was confirmed that the same statement could be shared with them. It was **agreed** that Ms Attridge (CUSU) would circulate the statement to College JCR Access Officers to pass on to undergraduate students.

It was reported that the filming currently happening with Swan Films is going very well; the relationship with the production company and the offer holder is working well, and there has been full cooperation with the College and Department.

Items 14 (minute 17/62), 15 (minute 17/63) and 16 (minute 17/64) on the agenda were brought forward and discussed at this point of the meeting.

17/55 INTERVIEWEE TRAVEL COSTS

A proposal was received for information (AF 17/03/4). The Director of Admissions reported that the proposal was made up of the recommendations of the Working Group with some small changes. The variations from the initial recommendations were that those currently in care and those currently in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) who can document this be refunded their public transport costs, and that College Admissions Offices undertake the administration in the initial year. It was noted that the current situation is anomalous since prospective applicants on CAO led events are supported in this way, but actual applicants are not.

The Director of Admissions reported that the Colleges' Outreach Monitoring Group (COMG) had approved the proposal, subject to two process charts being added; one for applicants and one for College Admissions Offices so they can be clear on the process.

It had been difficult to estimate the numbers involved and the cost attached to this. It was noted that there would be more of a sense of numbers with the introduction of the Free School Meals question on the SAQ/COPA, and that the estimation of numbers on the levy request was deliberately high to allow leeway in the first year, until more concrete numbers are known. It was therefore acknowledged that the cost could well come in under estimate.

It was suggested that there should be an upper limit, for example of £80, on the amount that Colleges would reimburse, and this suggestion was **approved**.

Where applicants cannot afford the initial outlay then Colleges may pay transport costs upfront for the applicant, in very exceptional circumstances.

With the above caveats, the proposal was **approved**, and will be forwarded to the Bursars' Levies Sub-committee for consideration.

17/56 TRANSCRIPTS FOR UK INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE APPLICANTS

The Director of Admissions reported on feedback regretting the loss of UK IB transcripts. The issue of whether to request transcripts from those UK applicants taking the IB had been discussed in depth previously. It was noted that such transcripts do not show like for like data due to differing use of internal assessment results. Comparability is therefore an issue, as with any linear system. It was noted that virtually all qualifications are now linear, so if transcripts are requested for UK IB applicants they would also have to be requested for other qualifications, including the reformed A Levels in England.

It was recognised that in some cases the transcripts are useful, but there are broader implications of asking schools to do even more work.

There was no appetite to change the agreed position, and whilst it was noted that should schools wish to supply a transcript they may do so, it was confirmed that they must not be required to do so.

17/57 ACCEPTANCE OF TOEFL

A paper was received for consideration (AF 17/03/5). The Director of Admissions reported that Cambridge is very much an outlier, with all other Russell Group institutions now accepting TOEFL. The test suffers from no greater lack of reliability or validity than IELTS. The University Language Centre sees no grounds not to accept TOEFL for undergraduate entry, and it is already accepted for graduate courses which creates inconsistency; accepting TOEFL would not have any negative implications for the University's Tier 4 Sponsor Licence.

The research shows that the level of academic English of applicants taking TOEFL can be expected to be similar to that of applicants taking IELTS, provided that the required overall score and scores for the components are set at an appropriate level. Concern was expressed at the age of the report linking TOEFL and IELTS scores, and it was noted that the Language Centre had done some more recent work on this. It was **agreed** that Miss Reed would circulate this paper.

It was clarified that only the TOEFL iBT (internet based test) should be accepted, as the paper based test does not have a speaking component.

The proposal to accept TOEFL as a suitable English language test was **approved** in principle for the 2018 cycle. It was **agreed** that this matter would be brought back to the June meeting of Admissions Forum with the proposed score levels to be considered.

17/58 ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

A paper was received for discussion (AF 17/03/6). The Director of Admissions reported that Mr Avery (CAO) had compiled a list of common queries received by College Admissions Offices about English language qualifications in order to try to improve our internal and external guidance.

Each of the queries and the guidance relating to them were discussed in turn.

It was **agreed** that IELTS requirements should be achieved in one sitting and Colleges should not consider candidates who are submitting several test scores to satisfy their requirements as having fulfilled the conditions of their offer.

It was noted that IELTS results are only valid for two years from the date of the exam and it was **agreed** that it should be stipulated that they still be valid on the first day of the Cambridge course, where they are included in a conditional offer. Where validity expires for deferred entry applicants they will need to retake the qualification, unless the College is able to accept other evidence of English language ability.

It was confirmed that offer holders are free to sit either 'IELTS Academic' or 'IELTS for UKVI (Academic)'. The test content is the same, the only difference is that IELTS for UKVI

(Academic) is sat at a centre which has undergone further security vetting and is approved by UK Visas & Immigration for general visa applications. As the University is a Trusted Sponsor, Colleges are able to use other English language assessments (such as IELTS Academic taken from a non-UKVI centre, or other English language qualifications deemed acceptable to Colleges) provided documentation is held on file confirming that the English language capability of the candidate has been assessed in all four elements and it is up to standard. It was **agreed** that applicant facing advice should be added to the website explaining the distinction and that Colleges do not require the UKVI test, which is usually more expensive and available at fewer test centres.

It was noted that the Study Cam website currently states: 'EU students – a high grade in English taken as part of a leaving examination (eg the European/French Baccalaureate, Abitur etc) may be acceptable.' This suggests that IELTS is not automatically required, but may be in cases where Colleges are uncertain. This generates a lot of queries. It was **agreed** that the guidance should be updated to state 'The standard of your English when assessed at interview will dictate whether or not you are required to take IELTS.'

It had previously been agreed by Admissions Forum to make IELTS scores of 6.0/6.5 a requirement at the point of application for those who are not native speakers of English who wish to be interviewed in Cambridge. It had also been agreed to make this a requirement for all candidates who wish to be interviewed overseas. It had come to light that this requirement was often being viewed as guidance instead, and being waived. It was therefore **agreed** that this should be guidance, not a requirement, and that the website and internal information should be updated to reflect this. It was noted that the wording should not refer to those who are 'not native speakers of English', but should specifically refer instead to overseas applicants so as to exclude those from the EU. The view was expressed that the guidance should go further and say that, in order to maximise their chances, applicants should have a level of 7.5 at interview. It was **agreed** that a clear and transparent statement is needed to make applicants aware that interviews involve both oral and written communication, and that strong levels of English are required. It should be made very clear that the minimum standard required for entry is 7.5, and therefore applicants should be around that level to maximise their chances at interview.

It was **agreed** that internal guidance should be drafted, incorporating the positions set out above, and made available through the Undergraduate Admissions Handbook and the Admissions Administrators' Guide.

17/59 **HONG KONG UNIVERSITY (HKU) SCHEME**

A proposal from Professor David Cardwell was received for consideration (AF 17/03/7). The Director of Admissions reported a declaration of interest on behalf of Professor Cardwell who is a visiting professor at Hong Kong University (HKU) prior to discussion of the proposal.

The Director of Admissions outlined the current very successful scheme (the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for which expires in 2017), and the suggested changes for another MoU covering the next five years. It was proposed that applicants will be selected at the same point but would complete two years at HKU, the second year being a specifically tailored programme, before entering into the second year of either Engineering or Computer Science as affiliate students at Cambridge. These students would also receive a qualification from HKU.

It was suggested that this proposal ought also to be taken to the Undergraduate Admissions Committee (UAC) for consideration.

The rationale behind year two entry instead of year one was queried. It was explained that the students could potentially be better prepared by spending two years at HKU; there are also potential benefits for the typically younger Chinese students in delaying arrival by a year, as well as a financial benefit, as students would only have to fund two or three years

of study in Cambridge instead of four. The numbers of this academically able cohort admitted are gradually increasing as Colleges take more of the 15 interviewed.

It was noted that the Memorandum of Understanding is between the University and HKU. It was queried what would happen if the University was approached by another institution overseas, and whether the door is open to other such requests. The current position is that transfers are not accepted, and it was noted that this agreement could be seen as formalising the breaking of this rule. It was further noted, however, that HKU are providing a specifically tailored course, which makes it different to a straightforward transfer.

Concerns about student integration into the College community were raised, as the first year here is often used by overseas students to familiarise themselves with the British system and form friendship groups. It was queried what incentive a whole cohort would have to integrate more widely with their fellow Cambridge students when they have already spent two years at HKU.

It was remarked that the paper does not provide a case for the proposed changes, and that it does not answer the question of precedent and how to respond to other universities' requests. It was questioned why the scheme should change as the current system works well.

It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would go back to Professor Cardwell and Engineering to request a paper setting out the case, also covering transition and precedent. This paper will be brought to the June meeting of Admissions Forum.

17/60 SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS AND OTHER INDEPENDENT LEARNERS

An extract of the minutes from the Standing Committee on Welfare and Finance held on 16 January 2017 was received for consideration (AF 17/03/8).

Two recommendations were proposed by the Standing Committee on Welfare and Finance to support the early identification of care leavers and independent offerees to ensure that any year-round accommodation need and eligibility for an enhanced Cambridge Bursary could be considered at an early stage:

- a) By asking Admissions Tutors to identify people who might be living independently from a reading of their UCAS applications and associated submitted documentation;
- b) By writing to the schools and colleges of offerees after offers have been made to ask schools to help ensure that any of their Cambridge offer-holders who were living independently had advised their Cambridge College of their circumstances. (Most Colleges routinely write to the schools and colleges of offerees, and an appropriate prompt could be added to such communications if Colleges do not wish to write an additional letter.)

If this can be picked up through the Extenuating Circumstances Form (ECF) then that would be helpful too. It was noted that the ECF and the guidance for completing it is due for review in advance of the next admissions round anyway.

It was queried when this would come into effect, and it was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would clarify with the STC whether schools should be contacted this year for this information (if so, the near-miss letter could be a way in which to do this).

17/61 COLLEGE BURSARIES PUBLICITY GUIDELINES

The Director of Admissions reported that the guidelines are due for review, and that it was unclear whether the previous guidelines had ever been formally agreed. A Working Group has been set up to develop a new set of guidelines to try and make sure that all Colleges can sign up to a common protocol. The Working Group is made up of Admissions Tutors, Senior Tutors and a Development Director. The Director of Admissions will bring the proposed guidelines back to the Admissions Forum for approval.

17/62 ALTERNATIVE FLEXIBLE ADMISSIONS OFFER FOR THE MATHEMATICAL TRIPOS

A proposal was received for consideration (AF 17/03/9). The Director of Admissions reported that whilst this item had been discussed very late in the February meeting, it had been agreed that it required further careful consideration.

After a detailed discussion, during which a number of views were expressed, it was generally felt that the proposal was of great interest, but that there were real reservations about the details. In particular, it was recommended that there needs to be a clear message that applicants are required to take both STEP papers, not just one, even if there is more flexibility on the grades required. There would need to be clarity over which Colleges were taking part in any pilot scheme (balancing this with the agreed messages about College choice), and the groups to which flexible offers might be made. Research into correlations of Tripos performance of underrepresented groups and STEP scores also needs to be refreshed. A suggestion was made that, in order to simplify the position, it could be stated that typical offers would be in the range of 1,2 to S,1 with applicants from those underrepresented groups being made an offer at the lower end of the range.

It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would take an alternative proposal back to the department for their view.

It was noted that this trial would be for 2019 entry and it was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions would bring a formulation of words back to the next meeting of Admissions Forum. Colleges were asked to contact the Director of Admissions if they had any real concerns.

The Director of Admissions also reported on the previous discussion on the Mathematics entry requirements and how the paper had been ambiguous with regard to IB Higher Level Physics. The Director of Admissions confirmed that Higher Level Physics need not be compulsory for Mathematics or Mathematics with Computer Science for 2019 entry as a College-wide requirement. Whilst Colleges may wish to stipulate this as a requirement themselves, its removal from the general requirements and the updating of the Study Cam website were **approved**.

17/63 ACCESS AGREEMENT 2018-19

A paper summarising potential targets was received for information (AF 17/03/10). Mr Beard and Mr Partington reported on the proposed targets. It was noted that the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) wants the sector to demonstrate year on year progress on access. The University's initial targets were set against a five year horizon and this is getting ever closer. It was noted that stating that targets set five years ago have been met and that the University is maintaining that position would not be acceptable.

The paper summarised the proposals from the Admissions Research Steering Group (ARSG). The deadline for submission of the Access Agreement is 30 May, an extension of one month on the standard deadline which was approved in recognition of internal process at Cambridge. The Agreement must go through the committee structure before submission, with Admissions Forum being the first stage. The proposed targets need to be evaluated in terms of appropriateness and achievability.

Mr Beard set out the four categories into which the targets fall: no change, revised, a new target, and possible future targets. Mr Beard summarised the proposals:

- a) *No change: Maintained sector and Participation of Local Areas 3 (POLAR3) targets*
The impact of A Level reform is unknown, and along with the current funding crisis in schools and colleges it had been agreed that it would be unwise to change our maintained school target at this time. In addition, the target of 13% for POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 is half a percent higher than current UCAS data suggests Cambridge could achieve, so the target is already challenging.

b) *Revised: Output Area Classification (OAC2011)*

ARSG has reviewed which groups are currently underrepresented in Cambridge and correlate with relative disadvantage. One group is to be removed and several are to be added in to the OAC measure following this analysis. The initial target was based on Cambridge data and was therefore skewed. National data has been used to revise the target to 13.9% from a new baseline of 11.5%.

c) *New target: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)*

This proposed target draws on census data, environmental factors, employment, and levels of education amongst other things, and are different to those drawn on by OAC. CAO research on this data suggests that those living in deciles 1-3 are underrepresented at Cambridge. The proposed target is 8.5% from a baseline of 7.7%. This is a new measure of which OFFA is likely to approve.

d) *Possible future targets: Care Leavers, Free School Meals and Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)*

Free School Meals (FSM), often used by the Government, was considered as a measure. However, there is currently no way of creating a baseline since this data is not available at the point of application through UCAS. It was proposed that FSM is collected by the University at the point of application in future (this was discussed further under item 16 (minute 17/64)).

The number of students in care is small and therefore potentially volatile as a measure. The national data suggests there are only about 30 such applicants a year who attain at the level required for admission to Cambridge. Instead of setting a target, enhanced bursaries could be made available for those who need 365 day a year accommodation. It was suggested that the rent could be waived entirely for the small number of applicants Colleges admit who are in this category. It is recognised by OFFA that the group most likely to be influenced by financial support is care leavers.

There was not enough data to form a target on Women in STEM, but it was recognised that this is an area which should be looked at in the future. It was noted that female admissions in Engineering and Computer Science fare well compared to the national position, however poor female numbers in Mathematics drag the average down. It was noted that it has not yet been possible to work out the position with Natural Sciences compared to the national position, as it would be necessary to weight the constituent student numbers in order to draw comparison with national data. Depending on the ability to analyse Natural Sciences, this could be looked at in the future as a possible target.

The possibility of introducing a target based around Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups was also explored, but it was concluded that it would not be appropriate to set a target in this area given the research shows that Cambridge admissions in this area are already representative when attainment is taken into account. Focus instead should be on outreach efforts.

Mr Beard reported on a helpful informal discussion with OFFA earlier in the week and the indication from that meeting was that the proposed targets would be met favourably by those reviewing the Access Agreement.

An in depth discussion of the proposed targets took place during which various views were expressed. It was stressed that all of the targets could get more difficult to hit in light of qualification reform, especially if A Level performance declines.

It was queried why the IMD baseline uses Cambridge data only when national data is available. It was explained that further analysis is needed before this can be done robustly. When moving to national data the target tends to naturally increase, which would lead to an increased target next year.

Concern was expressed that the targets are complicated to understand and to explain to those involved in the admissions process. There was also some concern that the University was being pressured by OFFA to commit to make progress on more and increasingly challenging targets. It was noted that OFFA is more likely to approve limits on targets where progress has already been made if new targets against which further progress can be made are introduced.

It was acknowledged that there is a lot of uncertainty as to what will happen politically in the next 3 years. However, it was broadly felt that the proposals present a workable solution for this coming year and will demonstrate to OFFA that Cambridge is legitimately trying to improve access for underrepresented groups. The data shows that the targets are achievable and that Colleges should be able to make progress towards them.

It was noted that OFFA is also asking for a target that demonstrates how Higher Education Providers will raise attainment in schools. Careful consideration needs to be taken on how/if this could be achieved so it is important to be prepared with other targets.

After detailed consideration of the proposed targets, a vote took place in which 22 Colleges voted in favour of approving the targets. The proposals were **approved** *nem con* with 7 abstentions.

17/64 **FREE SCHOOL MEALS QUESTION ON THE SAQ/COPA**

Mr Beard reported on a proposal to add a question on the SAQ/COPA asking if applicants have ever been eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) over the last six years. This could then be used as a flag in the Subject Moderation Spreadsheets. This data is not available from UCAS. Applicants would be asked for evidence of FSM eligibility only once an offer has been made. It is important to collect this data, and as the numbers admitted from this group are small the burden of asking for proof is minor. This proposal was **agreed**.

It was reported that in future years a change is likely to be brought in whereby FSM eligibility will be flagged to the school at the point of application to them. Therefore, in the future, schools will know if their pupils are eligible/in receipt of FSM. It is unclear at this stage whether this will be a regional or a national change.

17/65 **REVIEW OF THE ROUND UPDATE**

i) *Raw Marks*

Miss Reed reported that she had been pursuing with OFQUAL and UCAS the issue of whether raw marks will be on results slips, and whether all Awarding Bodies will issue comparable information. Whilst it had been confirmed that at least one Awarding Body will be providing raw marks, there is still no clear indication of what will be provided by the others.

It was queried what should be asked for in the 'Near Miss' letter, and whether Colleges should be collecting raw marks from those who have them. It was suggested that a request could be added to the letter to ask for raw marks to be provided where available, but it was felt that this would likely create more queries. It is likely that the situation regarding availability of raw marks will be unclear until August.

It was noted that it is difficult to look at raw marks and not think of them as comparable to UMS, although they are very different.

It was **agreed** that Miss Reed would check when AS Level raw marks and boundaries are published.

It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions and Miss Reed would put together and circulate a form of words prior to the sending out of the Near Miss letter.

ii) *Completion of Subject Moderation Spreadsheets*

Miss Reed reported that it is not possible to universally add Admissions Tutors to the various Subject Moderation Moodle sites unless CAO was to set them all up in order to be the site owner in each case. CAO cannot undertake to do this, especially in Michaelmas term, therefore it was **agreed** that Miss Reed would circulate email lists to all Subject Convenors and inform them that Admissions Tutors must be added to all sites.

iii) *Protocol for College Websites*

It was noted that a meeting of the Working Group would take place on 12 May 2017.

iv) *The Student Room feedback (meals and accommodation)*

It was noted that this would be discussed at the April meeting of the Senior Tutors' Committee (STC).

v) *Discussion of interview questions*

The Director of Admissions reported that the requirement for applicants to agree to not discuss their interview for a period of at least 36 months had caused some concern in schools. It was clarified that the requirement had been introduced precisely to avoid what Crimson Hub is currently trying to do. Specifically, it had been designed to prevent current students talking about their interviews and from selling the questions.

It was suggested that the wording be changed to refer to sharing information, and particularly the detail of the questions asked, with any commercial organisations. It was noted that it is not only commercial organisations that pose a risk, as schools may also be collecting details of the interview questions in order to help future applicants. It was **agreed** that the Director of Admissions and Miss Reed would circulate a form of words for approval. This will need to be approved promptly, and before the COPA goes live in July.

vi) *Applicant photo*

Miss Reed reported on the request to investigate if unconscious bias can be evidenced in the process. The Admissions Research Steering Group had not approved this request due to a large number of outstanding items on the research schedule and there being no resource to investigate this at this time.

Miss Reed reported that she had looked into the technical feasibility of moving the photo onto the Interview Report Form from the Cambridge Applicant Print Out (CAPO). It was confirmed that, whilst the photo would still have to be collected at the point of application, it could be displayed on the Interview Report Form instead of on the CAPO, where APEX (the CamSIS bolt-on) is used for interviewing. The silhouette would still show on the CAPO, and the photo would be available in 360 on CamSIS. Miss Reed is currently surveying College Admissions Offices to check if they all use the APEX system for generating their Interview Report Forms. Responses so far indicate that this is the case. It was noted that due to time pressures this cannot be put in place for July (when the COPA goes live).

It was reported that this will not work for organ scholarship applicants and those interviewed overseas due to the timings of interviews and APEX not being used for these.

The Applicant Portal Project is looking optimistic, and it is hoped that it will be in place for September 2018. It was felt that it would be best to wait for the applicant portal at which point there would be more flexible functionality. It was recognised that an agreement in principle on the future of the applicant photo is still needed.

vii) *Consideration of Joint Tripos applicants for a single Tripos*

It was noted that there was only one joint Tripos applicant who was made a single Tripos offer in the 2017 round. The Director of Admissions reported that the current

agreed position was that such applicants should not be asked whether they would wish to be considered for a single Tripos subject before interview, and that instead Subject Convenors would highlight strong applicants who may be of interest to the single Triposes in the Winter Pool. There was no appetite to change this position.

17/66 **2017 INTERVIEW DATES**

Interview dates for 2017 were received (AF 17/03/11).

17/67 **NEAR MISS PROTOCOL**

The Chair reported that in previous years Colleges had been reminded at this time that reprieves in numbers managed subjects are not permitted until the Director of Admissions can assess the situation in August. It is also best practice not to relieve any near miss International Baccalaureate offer holders until the wider field of results are known. At the Admissions Research Steering Group meeting held on 16 March it was proposed that there should be no reprieves on *any home* near misses until the gathered field has been considered at the Summer Pool, with the exception of approval from the Director of Admissions on a case by case basis. This would not apply to overseas offer holders.

There were concerns that this may make matters worse in terms of time pressures. Concern was also expressed that this proposal could potentially disadvantage applicants in Clearing, and it could cause even more stress to offer holders at an already stressful time.

It was queried whether the Pool could be delayed, and it was stated that this would not be an option as it would both disadvantage applicants and prove very unpopular with both the wider sector and with schools.

The need to be clear with near miss applicants, giving them a choice of being released or waiting until the outcome of the Summer Pool, was stressed. It was **agreed** that CAO would provide Colleges with a list of those applicants who have not had a confirmation decision and do not have an insurance offer, either because they have missed that offer or because they didn't have one in the first place.

The proposal was **not approved**, but it was **agreed** that Colleges will keep in mind that they should be careful of near miss reprieves until the outcome of the open offer holders is known. As usual, there should be no reprieves in numbers-managed subjects until the situation regarding numbers is clear in August.

17/68 **NETWORK FOR EAST ANGLIAN COLLABORATIVE OUTREACH (NEACO) UPDATE**

An update was received for information (AF 17/03/12).

17/69 **WORKING PARTY ON ADMISSIONS FEEDBACK**

The Deputy Chair reported on the proposed remit of this new group, which includes sharing resources and experience, understanding the minimum level of feedback required, and sharing examples of good feedback. A Moodle site will be set up for Colleges to access this information. The development of shared protocols and the confirmation of current guidelines should ease the number of complaints received if there is more consistency across the information provided in feedback by Colleges. It was **agreed** that a Working Party should be convened, and that Miss Eagling would send a request for volunteers.

17/70 **ANNUAL UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS STATISTICS**

The annual undergraduate admissions statistics were received for information along with a summary of changes for this year's publication (AF 17/03/13a,b). The Director of Admissions reported on the changes highlighted in the summary document and these were **approved**.

17/71 **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUESTS**

A summary of FOI requests recently serviced by CAO was received for information (AF 17/03/14).

17/72 MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The following minutes were received for information:

- i) *International Recruitment and Admissions Working Group held on 8 February 2017* (AF 17/03/15)
- ii) *CAO Management Group held on 14 February 2017* (AF 17/03/16)
- iii) *Admissions Administrators' Group held on 23 February 2017* (AF 17/03/17)
- iv) *Admissions Research Steering Group held on 24 February 2017* (AF 17/03/18)
- v) *Schools and Colleges Liaison Officers' Group held on 27 February 2017* (AF 17/03/19)
- vi) *Outreach Steering Group held on 1 March 2017* (AF 17/03/20)
- vii) *Cambridge Bursary Schemes Sub Group held on 2 March 2017* (AF 17/03/21)
- viii) *CamSIS Special Interest Group held on 2 March 2017* (AF 17/03/22)
- ix) *Undergraduate Admissions Committee held on 6 March 2017* (AF 17/03/23)
- x) *Overseas Qualifications Reference Group held on 9 March 2017* (AF 17/03/24)
- xi) *Admissions Research Steering Group held on 16 March 2017* (AF 17/03/25)
 Attention was drawn to the penultimate paragraph on page 6 concerning reprieves for near misses, reported under the post agenda item (Extended discussion of issues raised by Dr Corver's presentation). The Chair reported that this had been covered already under item 19 (minute 17/67) regarding the Near Miss Protocol.

17/73 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- i) *Tier 4 processes for students under 18*

The Director of Admissions reported that the International Student Team (IST) is reviewing its Tier 4 processes for students under 18, of which there are a small number each year. There is no requirement currently for parents of under 18s to complete a consent form as part of the admissions process, but the IST is looking to introduce this requirement for students who will be starting in Michaelmas 2017. The IST has offered to do this on Colleges' behalf, liaising directly with applicants and copying in their College. This proposal was **approved**.

Attention was drawn to the fact that it is not possible for any university to sponsor students under 16 for a Tier 4 visa. Two such applicants have been identified this year. Although it is possible these students may have alternative visa arrangements, Colleges need to be mindful of this issue when making offers to such applicants.

- ii) *Cambridge Trust decisions*

The timing of Cambridge Trust decisions was flagged as being problematic. It was **agreed** that Dr MacVinish would take this feedback to the Cambridge Trust Undergraduate Selection Committee.

17/74 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on:

Friday 2 June 2017 (Syndicate Room, Old Schools)

Confidential

Confirmed

The dates for 2016/17 and 2017/18 have been agreed as:

Wednesday 16 August 2017

Friday 13 October 2017

Friday 17 November 2017

Friday 19 January 2018

Friday 23 February 2018

Friday 27 April 2018

Friday 1 June 2018

Wednesday 15 August 2018

All Admissions Forum meetings will take place in the **Syndicate Room, Old Schools** unless otherwise notified.

CAO/04.05.17