



## CSAT 2016 Panel Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of the CSAT Panel held at 11:00am,  
Wednesday 3 February 2016 in Room SW00, William Gates Building

**Present:** Bogdan Roman (Chair)  
Claire Chapman (Secretary)  
David Chisnall  
Sean Holden  
Alan Mycroft  
Andy Rice  
Richard Watts

BR welcomed all to the inaugural meeting of the panel.

It was officially announced today that the University will be introducing a standard entrance test taken into effect from students applying in October 2016 onwards. This comes after new government plans to abolish AS Module scores which are currently what the colleges assess at interview.

### 1. **Apologies**

John Fawcett

### 2. **Membership of Panel**

The membership of the panel was noted.

### 3. **Admissions Assessment for 2016: proposals**

The following were received from Dr Sam Lucy, Director of Admissions for the Colleges:-

- i) Summary of length and format of all the proposed assessments Pre-interview and At interview
- ii) Suggestion of identifying sixth-form teaching colleagues who can consult with when draft assessment papers are available

### 4. **Actions for March and December**

The following documents were received:-

- Paper by BR and slides by Rob Harle (from last DoS meeting)
- BR's call for feedback and replies from DoSes: SH, AR, AM, Chris Town, Larry Paulson, Frank Stajano, Peter Robinson, Rob Harle

**i) Test structure and duration (for March deadline)**

It was agreed that:-

- a) The test would remain at 100 minutes in duration
- b) The test will aim for 20 questions
- c) Section A will be easier with potentially tweaked/enhanced versions of A-Level standard, and Section B more challenging. It was noted that Oxford's MAT has a similar scheme with 10 multiple-choice easier questions preceding 5 long questions, each with 4-6 sub-questions, and all mandatory, with a total duration of 2.5 hours.
- d) Consensus in the panel was that questions should not be multiple choice, though it was acknowledged that perhaps Section A could be since it's mostly there to boost morale. Rather than help with selection.
- e) Each college should decide if test should be sat before or after the interview.

**ii) Test questions: source, types, marking scheme, schedule for setting**

It was agreed that:-

- a) The panel members present at the meeting agreed to contribute questions and corresponding marking schemes
- b) DoSes, as well as Postdocs and PhD students, would be asked to contribute questions
- c) People who contribute questions should be encouraged to also submit a marking scheme for their question - see also iv)
- d) This year, all DoSes, including those who did not contribute any questions, can use the test
- e) BR to approach HoD for potential funding for the departmental PhD/RA resource as question setters
- f) BR to write to the Director of Admissions to encourage Colleges and the Admissions Office to help with funding
- g) AM and BR to produce 1 page of guidance on setting questions which will include a few sample questions from last year. This will be circulated to all potential question setters

**iii) Preparation material and whether to publish previous test**

It was agreed that:-

- a) Giving all candidates the same opportunity to prepare is important.
- b) Making the previous year test available online is in principle a good idea (but not before April as the CSAT is still to be sat by mature applicants)

**iv) Marking**

It was recognised that, although a few colleges seek to use the test mainly as a base for discussion at the interview, the final mark obtained in the test is important for the pool and to ensure an objective common metric across all candidates, of which more than 50% are Overseas or EU. This seeks to also answer the current external pressure regarding objectivity and transparency.

There was general agreement in the panel that the CSAT could be marked like STEP, by PhD and Postdocs, the same question from all scripts being marked by the same markers, ensuring consistency and that alternative solutions are rewarded. The panel will revisit this item for a more concrete proposal.

BR will approach the HoD as well as the Director of Admissions for funding support.

**v) Trial**

A trial to be run in week 0 of the Easter Term on the current undergrad cohort.

**vi) Any other items**

None.

**5. Proposal to Admissions Forum**

A final proposal to be made by the end of March regarding duration, test structure, public information and preparation material.

**6. Date of next meeting**

To be confirmed by Doodle Poll.