



## Global Student Consultative Forum – Americas

**ACTIONS: 17 June 2020**

Item	Action	Action by	Status	Due Date
<b>Actions from meeting 17 June 2020</b>				
1.	LinkedIn communication to students in that region to invite them to join.	MT/TL	Outstanding	
2.	Provide the webinar on CP1. Will contact student reps if a recording has been made available	MT	Outstanding	
3.	Provide information on our Student Employer Contact network which an individual within of company can sign up to be.	MT	Outstanding	
<b>Actions from previous meetings</b>				
4.	None			



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and Faculty  
of Actuaries



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# Notes

## Americas – Global Student Consultative Forum

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 – 16:00 -17:00(UK Time)

Blue Jeans Conference Call

### Attending:

Brian Blake (BB)– Lead Student Representative  
Andrea (AN) – Student Representative  
Dipti Kalyandurg (DK) Student Representation  
**IFoA Executive Staff**  
Matt Tennant (MT) – Quality Manager  
Andrew Berrow (AB) – Head of Learning & Operations  
Tricia Lockhart (TL)- Quality Executive

### Apologies:

Amarpreet Virdee - Student Representative  
Katherine Wang -Student Representative

Item	Discussion Points	Actions
1	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> TL/MT welcomed everyone to forum,	
2.	<b>Notes from last meeting</b> Notes from the last meeting were agreed were an accurate account  <b>Action from last meeting</b>  MT confirmed LinkedIn group for students based in Americas has been created. MT/TL agreed to work on a communication to students in that region to invite them to join.	MT/TL



MT requested feedback on student representatives if any further feedback was received on the subject topics within CP1 paper. No feedback was received.

MT confirmed that a webinar on CP1 did take place, and will contact student reps if a recording has been made available

MT provided an update to the details of exemptions from the Society of Actuaries which has been published earlier in the year.

**MT**



## **Students Comments**

### **3.1 Covid-19 Exam Bookings**

BB requested clarification on the delays in communications in advising students whether or not the examinations would go ahead for April session. AB gave a full detailed account of the time frames & process the IFOA went through in its decision making leading up to the announcement of the exams moving online. AB provided assurance to the forum that as soon as the IFoA were confident that we could run our exams online it was then communicated to students.

Feedback was received from student representatives about the timing of communications and the uncertainty of students not knowing if the exams would run, however student representatives thanked AB for the detailed explanation.

### **3.2 Online Exams**

AN confirmed that all exams apart from the CS & CM exams were ran for the April 20 exam session. The Forum were advised the CS and CM will be available for the next session in September with additional guidance on the format coming shortly.

BB highlighted that students in the America's find the times of exams unsociable. AB provided an explanation that the IFOA can currently run the exams UK time, to maintain the Integrity of the exam paper to avoid them being shared. The IFoA is also required to provide online support to students during an exam should it be needed. MT advised running different cohorts multiple time zones we would need to create multiple papers which isn't feasible at this time. DK asked whether the UK timings could be adjusted in some way to accommodate this ongoing issue.

AB confirmed this has been a recurring comment from International members and the IFoA will continue to explore if alternative options in the future can be considered.

### **3.3 September Exam Questions**

BB provided some feedback on the certain exams. Students reported SP7 harder than previous sessions. Feedback was received that SP8 was formatted differently and was heavy on sums/calculations.

A query was received on whether CP2 paper 1 had errors in a question part. MT advised that if an error in the paper was identified this would be picked up by the examiners and adjustment would be made in marking.



Item	Discussion Points	Actions
	<p><b>3.4 Other – Exam Related</b> BB advised that there had been some concerns over uploading of exams however thanked the team for the swift responses received when issues arose</p> <p><b>3.5 Work Experience Requirements</b> MT advised since the last forum the Quality team had updated information on the website in relation to PPD and that there was a Webinar on the main page which was presented by himself and a member of the Quality team explaining the format &amp; requirements of work experience.</p> <p>MT also advised the IFoA have announced where students PPD deadline falls between June &amp; August, and if a student member is unable to complete PPD, they would be allowed to apply for an exemption through contacting our Education Services Team.</p> <p><b>3.6 Exemptions</b> MT - Advised that the SOA exemptions from 2019 have now been agreed information has been updated on website</p> <p><b>4. Approaches to Study and Employer Support</b> MT provided an overview of a paper which details how student members report their approaches to exam study. MT asked if the student members can report other methods. Feedback was provided that the survey doesn't include mock exams or private tuition outside of ActEd.</p> <p>BB provided feedback that many companies in the region are not providing financial support for additional study resources or material.</p> <p>DK Spoke about lack of involvement/support with her employer, MT advised he would look at providing information on our Student Employer Contact network which an individual within of company can sign up to be.</p>	MT



17 June 2020

Item	Discussion Points	Actions
	<b>Any Other Business</b> MT/ TL thanked the forum for their contribution and closed the meeting.	
	<b>Proposed date of next meeting</b> November 2020	



## Student Consultative Forum Feedback Return Form April 2020 Exam Session

Topic:		Exam Booking COVID-19 Correspondence: <i>To cover feedback and comments relating to the process of booking exams, including COVID-19 related communication and guidance.</i>	
Student Comment		IFoA Response	Further Action Taken (if applicable)
No major issues, generally positive experience.		Thank you for the positive feedback. After delivering the majority of our examinations online in April, and receiving much positive feedback from candidates, we are confident that we can do the same in September, including those exams which were not available for the April 2020 exam session. We are currently reviewing ways to improve the running of the online exams for the September session.	
The communication was timely and up to date. The FAQ's were very helpful in answering queries. Besides that, the IFoA was prompt to respond to the questions or clarifications asked via email.		Thank you for the positive feedback. We are currently reviewing ways to improve the running of the online exams for the September session. We have an updated FAQs section for the September 2020 exam session.	

Topic:	Online Exams Platform:
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<i>For Online Platforms, this should cover technical questions e.g. equipment/software/download/upload etc.</i>		
<b>Student Comment</b>	<b>IFoA Response</b>	<b>Further Action Taken (if applicable)</b>
Most of the feedback was very positive.	Thank you for the positive feedback. After delivering the majority of our examinations online in April, and receiving much positive feedback from candidates, we are confident that we can do the same in September, including those exams which were not available for the April 2020 exam session. We are currently reviewing ways to improve the running of the online exams for the September session.	
It was mentioned that “clearing the cache” aided in uploading after an initial failed attempt, this could be included in the FAQs if it’s not there already.	Thank you for providing this feedback. The information regarding ‘clearing the cache’ was available on the IFoA website.  However, your feedback is appreciate and it is important to note that all instructions, guidance and materials will be reviewed for the September 2020 session.	
Confirmation message for upload should include filename.	Thank you for your feedback.  After delivering the majority of our examinations online in April, and receiving much positive feedback from candidates, we are confident that we can do the same in September, including those exams which were not available for the April 2020 exam session.	





	Now that all exams are to be held online for the September 2020 session, we are currently reviewing ways to improve the running of the online exams for the September session. One area is altering the confirmation a member receives when uploading their exam answer script.	
The equipment/software wasn't too complicated to arrange for.	Thank you for the positive feedback. After delivering the majority of our examinations online in April, and receiving much positive feedback from candidates, we are confident that we can do the same in September, including those exams which were not available for the April 2020 exam session. We are currently reviewing ways to improve the running of the online exams for the September session.	
The upload and download process was fairly straightforward too (on the new exams platform) and the instructions provided by IFoA helped to navigate through the website. There was no issue found while uploading/downloading the paper during the exam.	Thank you for the positive feedback. After delivering the majority of our examinations online in April, and receiving much positive feedback from candidates, we are confident that we can do the same in September, including those exams which were not available for the April 2020 exam session. We are currently reviewing ways to improve the running of the online exams for the September session.	
For North America students timing of the exam was in between 3am-4am and was considered to be a constraint in giving a good attempt. Request the IFoA to consider the North American timezone for the September attempt.	Thank you for your feedback. For both April 2020 and the up-coming September 2020, all exams are held at UK time only.	



	<p>The IFoA have members sitting globally and unfortunately at this moment in time we are unable to host online exams to each member's local time. Currently all online exams will be held at UK time only, no exceptions can be made. The IFoA must ensure that all exams are fully supported, ensuring successful running of the online exams and currently we are only able to do this by hosting exams at UK time only.</p> <p>Start times for the new online examinations will be between 08:00 and 10:00 UK time. Exact timings are detailed in the joining instructions which are released at least 2 weeks prior to the exams taking place.</p>	
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Topic:		Other – Exam Related: <i>Access Arrangements, Mitigating Circumstances, Results, etc.</i>	
Student Comment	IFoA Response	Further Action Taken (if applicable)	
<p><b>Mitigating Circumstances</b> Mainly centred around issues and mental strain resulting from the pandemic.</p> <p>Moving from writing to typing posed a difficulty in the structured exams for some students, considering the time and pressure. Particularly difficult for those needing to show working.</p>	<p>Where students believe that unforeseen circumstances have affected their exam performance then candidates should consider applying for Mitigating Circumstances. Where a student is uncertain of the requirements for making an application, they can contact</p>		



	<a href="mailto:mitigating.circumstances@actuaries.org.uk">mitigating.circumstances@actuaries.org.uk</a>	
<p><b>Results</b></p> <p>A “fail” email is said to be sent out immediately after submission, will need clarification.</p> <p>The April exam results come out a bit late which gives lesser time to prepare for the September attempt, having the results earlier could give more time for preparation for the next attempt</p>	<p>Thank you for providing us details of this issue. We are not aware of any email which is sent during the results period. If you could provide further information on this and we will happily look into this.</p> <p>Unfortunately we are unable to alter the results release date. Due to the timetable changes which were made to allow the exams to take place in April, this extended the marking process.</p> <p>Results area released in the week commencing the 20 July (Core Principles subjects (CB1-2;): Tuesday 21 July 2020 / Core Practices, Specialist Principles and Specialist Advanced subjects: Thursday 23 July 2020).</p> <p>Due to separating the booking process and opening the CM/CS exams will be available to book from the 20 July, all remaining exams will be available to book from the 27 July.</p> <p>We recommend that members book onto their chosen course as soon as possible to avoid any disappointment.</p>	



Topic:		April 2020 Exam Questions: <i>To cover feedback and comments relating to exam questions.</i>	
Student Comment	IFoA Response	Further Action Taken (if applicable)	
It was said there were errors in CP2 paper 1  For CP 2, examination paper was found to be lengthy and couldn't finish the full paper in time.	Should any errors be identified in our exam papers, this will be taken into consideration in the marking.  Our exam papers go through a testing in advance of students sitting them. However, we recognise the exam paper was not initially written for an online format. Time constraints were one of many factors in the determination of the pass mark.		
It was felt the exam question in SP7 were particularly difficult	In response to the comment on the exam being too long, the April 2020 paper was similar to past papers in length, and this was checked as part of the general setting process – as done for all IFoA exams – by thorough “guinea-pigging” to check the length of paper, amongst other aspects of the paper. If a paper appears to have been unexpectedly challenging for candidates in terms of the time available or how much to get onto the answer scripts, the examiners will take that into account when determining the pass mark for the exam.		
For SP8, examination paper had a different pattern and found to have been more difficult as compared to past year papers. Higher weightage was given	In response to the comment on the exam being too long, the April 2020 paper was		



to sums than what the past papers reflected, where more weightage is given to application based/higher order questions. The examination was believed to have had a different split (between application based, higher order, sums, core reading) from prior years due to it being online. Also, solving sums on word which included writing the symbols took longer than a handwritten exam. This was also felt to be one of the constraints in giving a good attempt.	similar to past papers in length, and this was checked as part of the general setting process – as done for all IFoA exams – by thorough “guinea-pigging” to check the length of paper, amongst other aspects of the paper. If a paper appears to have been unexpectedly challenging for candidates in terms of the time available or how much to get onto the answer scripts, the examiners will take that into account when determining the pass mark for the exam.	
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Topic:	Tuition: <i>To cover feedback and comments relating to ActEd.</i>	
Student Comment	ActEd Response	Further Action Taken (if applicable)

Topic:	Work Experience Requirements: <i>To cover feedback and comments relating to Personal and Professional Development and/or Work-Based Skills, and Form A/B.</i>	
Student Comment	IFoA Response	Further Action Taken (if applicable)
Will there be any adjustments to PPD etc arrangements for this year considering the pandemic?	The IFoA have made a provision for students to request an extension to their	



	PPD deadline for 3 months should their deadline fall in April-August. Student members who continue to work and can continue recording PPD should continue to do so.	
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<div> <div>Topic:</div> <div>Student Communications: <i>To cover newsletters, handbooks, webpages etc.</i></div> </div>		
Student Comment	IFoA Response	Further Action Taken (if applicable)
Communication mechanisms have received good responses, however, there was great frustration in the amount of time taken to come to a decision regarding the exams and their format.	<p>Thank you for your feedback, and we are sorry you felt the communication was insufficient.</p> <p>The COVID-19 situation was an unprecedented situation for everyone and like many other international actuarial associations, we had to carefully balance the wellbeing of our candidates and their families with the desire of many student members to complete their current studies. We followed advice from either the WHO, UK Government, or the British Council - who guided us on international examination centres.</p> <p>Advice changed significantly in the week beginning 16 March 2020, and many global third-party examination centres started to close. Like the US Society of</p>	Due to the limited time, the IFoA did provide students with all essential guidance needed for sitting and completing their online exam. However, your feedback is appreciate and it is important to note that we are currently arranging for the September 2020 sitting and that all instructions, guidance and materials will be reviewed.



	<p>Actuaries - who on 17 March 2020 announced postponement of their examinations - we promptly came to a decision. We immediately communicated to you that none of our assessments would take place in examination centres and that we would work quickly to identify other solutions, including moving examinations online.</p> <p>Only five working days later we announced the first details of our revised April examinations; specifically, following a full review by our Chief Examiners and IT suppliers, the examinations that we would be moving online and those we would have to cancel. Three working days later we were able to provide you with detailed information on these examinations and the essential documents you need to read before deciding whether to continue with your studies or cancel your bookings.</p> <p>While we understand that you would have wished to have had this information sooner, we believe that to implement online examinations and communicate all essential details to you within nine working days in the current circumstances shows the IFoA's commitment to providing members with choice over your April examinations.</p>	
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<b>Employer Support:</b> <i>The IFoA is seeking feedback on support provided to student members by their employers. This can include study days, number of exam resit opportunities, mentoring etc. Please do not specify employer. We are looking for comparison of geographic region.</i>		
<b>Topic:</b>		
<b>Student Comment</b>	<b>IFoA Response</b>	<b>Further Action Taken (if applicable)</b>
In North America getting study support for IFoA exams is not standard as there are not many students from IFoA, however some employers do provide it. Companies don't have the study policies specific to IFoA exams and hence find it difficult to prepare study support specific for the IFoA exams. Having more awareness amongst companies of IFoA exams and study support documents could help companies support students better.	The IFoA is collecting feedback from employer support from our international students to gain better insight into the differences in regions and sectors around the globe. We thank students for their time in providing this information.	

<b>Other:</b> <i>To cover feedback and comments relating to any other aspects of the IFoA student experience.</i>		
<b>Topic:</b>		
<b>Student Comment</b>	<b>IFoA Response</b>	<b>Further Action Taken (if applicable)</b>