



Europe – Global Student Consultative Forum

Wednesday 27th November – 17:00-18:00 (UK Time)

Blue Jeans Conference Call

Attending: Adina Ciobotea – Lead Student Representative

IFoA Executive Staff

Matt Tennant – Quality Manager

Alison Gorton – Senior Quality Executive

Andrew Berrow – Head of Learning & Operations

Apologies: Nikunj Sharma
Hanna Hohner

| Item | Discussion Points |
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| 1 | Welcome and Introductions |
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| | Introduced Adina to the Matt and Andrew as the new Lead Student Representative for Europe GSCF |
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| 2. | Notes from last meeting |
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| | None |
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| 3 | Students Comments |
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| | As Adina is new to the role, there were no comments/feedback received from students based in Europe. A general discussion took place and any important remarks received from other Regions have been included in these notes. |
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| | 3.1 Exam Bookings |
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| | A number of comments have been received from students who were unable to book onto CP2. Note that there are currently resourcing constraints for CP2, and that the numbers had to be capped to ensure that all the papers could be marked on time. The Quality and Assessment teams were working |
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| Item | Discussion Points |
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to increase the entry numbers. It was noted that the cap on CP2 for the April 2020 exam session would depend on how many Markers are available for the session.

As places are limited, students are to be encouraged to book once exam booking opens.

3.2 Exam Centres

Adina reported that the British Council offices would not allow snacks to be taken into a centre. Andrew will arrange a follow-up with the British Council regarding this as suitable snacks and drinks should be allowed.

It was also reported that the centre in Cologne was difficult to locate; this has been reported to the Examinations team to follow up

3.3 Online Exams

It was noted that the feedback for CP3 was generally positive and that the exam had run smoothly

Contingency Links

Concerns were raised regarding the contingency links, and the risk that students could obtain the exam paper early due to the individual cohorts for online exams. It is noted that the IFoA has an exam platform currently in development that will not require the exams to be staggered in cohorts. Currently there is no date when this will come into effect.

3.4 September 2019 Exam Questions

Some comments have been received to how CP2 paper is time tested. It was also noted that CP1 paper is normally weighted towards some particular sectors such as Life Insurance and asked if other 'topics/sectors' are covered.

Noted that for CP1, the 45 planning time was almost 'too reasonable' and didn't need the full amount of time. Once the written section of the examination began, students felt there isn't enough time to complete the paper within the allocated time. This had been a recurring comment across other forums and we will feed back to the examining teams.

3.5 Other – Exam Related

It has been requested that more support material that is made available for 'R' and can the IFoA highlight further the learning resources and where students can find them. It was advised that there are a number of free-source learning material on 'R' and are in conversations with ActEd on how we can better support students. Some students are very experienced with R software however others are very in-experienced.

Timetabling

It was confirmed that the IFoA are aware of 'common sittings' – pairs of exams that are often sat in the same exam session, and that these are taken into account when setting exams and that the effort is also made to vary which pairs of exams clash. It was noted that high-volume papers such as CS1 and CM1 have to be scheduled earlier in the exam session to ensure they can be marked in time. It was noted that some exams have to be held in the morning due to international time zones, to prevent international students from sitting exams at unsociable hours. The IFoA also aims to reduce the cost of venue hire by scheduling similar sized exams close together.

Results

Feedback received from students about the length of time to release results. It was noted that the ActEd tutorial deadlines are not in line with the IFoA results, which makes it harder for students to plan what to study for. ActEd recommend students book onto new subjects as opposed to waiting to see if they have passed subjects they already sat.

A number of steps are being taken with the aspiration to shorten the marking timeline. The first was the introduction of a new online marking platform. This was currently used for paper-based exams, and the IFoA were looking to move the online exams onto this platform once the new online exam platform was in place. The IFoA were looking to implement a number of features on the platform which we hope will speed up the marking, while maintaining a high quality of marking. It was noted that the quality of the marking was a priority over timescales. It would take time to implement these features, as markers needed to become more familiar with the system, there would need to be confidence that they could always deliver within the timeframe, and all exams would need to be moved to this platform.

Marking Discrepancies

The forum noted that when students have made Subject Access Requests (SARs), that they will receive full marks from one marker, and no marks from another marker. It was asked how this can occur on numerical questions. LG noted that often markers will come to different conclusions when marking, and that this is not necessarily an error in marking.

It was noted that a [Marking Guidelines document is available on the IFoA website](#) which gives details on what occurs during the marking process, and the criteria for a script review

3.6 Tuition – no comments

3.7 Work Experience Requirements

A request was received that the IFoA publish some addition good-practice examples to help students benchmark their PPD records against. The mini-guides are quite limited in the scope. This will be reviewed by the team responsible.

PPD is seen as a positive change from the previous Work-Based Skills (WBS). The IFoA have been asked if it would be possible to have notifications of what mandatory parts are still outstanding, or whether students have met the mandatory requirements for their year. The Quality Manager had spoken to the development team on this, but it was noted that it would be an extensive piece of development that would need to be considered alongside other priorities. A review was currently being conducted to see if functionality could be implemented similar to those found for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) such as downloading a transcript of submissions.

It has been noted that sometimes character limits can vary between different versions of word, which can cause an issue for those who will initially log their PPD in a different format to submit for approval by a line manager. A guidance would be published online for which versions of Microsoft Word do not have the character limit issue

3.8 Student Communications

Students are waiting for updates around mutual recognition. The IFoA website will be updated as soon as these have been agreed likely to be early 2020

3.9 Other

To note that the IFoA are developing a solution to allow student to access their breakdown of marks from the Members Area, as opposed to making a Subject Access Request. This system would be tested in December 2019 and January 2020. It was noted that SARs would still need to be run for the September 2019 exam session, but the IFoA were aiming to implement the new system by results release in July 2020.

It was confirmed that students would receive the same information that they currently receive in an SAR, which could include whether Mitigating Circumstances were taken into account, or if global scaling had taken place.

It was noted that student representatives could share this information outside the meeting.

Pass Lists and Sharing Results with Employers

The Times Qualifiers List

Education Committee had asked if students still wished to have their names published in The Times Qualifiers List. The forum agreed that they wanted to keep this system in place.

Sharing Results with Employers

| Item | Discussion Points |
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| | <p>The IFoA would be meeting with student employers, to get their views on how to best share student results after pass lists are removed. Depending on the agreed solution, students may need to opt in/opt out to have their results made available to their employers. It was noted that one of the flaws with the current pass lists is they do not differentiate between students with the same name, which can cause confusion. AB noted that the IFoA cannot publish a student's name and ARN together, as this would be a violation of GDPR. It was confirmed that pass lists would still be produced for the September 2019 exams. It was noted that any proposed solution would need to be agreed by students.</p> <p>The forum noted that the link to the exam results contingency page, to be used in the event of high traffic to the IFoA website when results are released, is only available through the IFoA website. The forum asked if it were possible to publish the link in the student newsletter ahead of the results release, in case the website is down when results are released.</p> |
| 2.3 | <p>AOB</p> <p>Post-Examination Reporting Methods</p> <p>MT noted that there are currently 4 forms a student can fill out in the event of an exam incident:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mitigating Circumstances Form – For incidents that affected a candidate's performance in an exam. 2) Exam Centre Incident Report Form – To report an incident in an exam centre, to be used as supporting evidence for a Mitigating Circumstances application countersigned by centre invigilator. 3) Exam Centre Feedback Form – To provide generic feedback to the IFoA on an exam centre. 4) Online Exam Incident Form – To report an incident in an online exam, which may be considered for Mitigating Circumstances. <p>MT asked the forum for any feedback on these reporting methods. The forum reported that they were not familiar with all of the forms and noted some confusion between the Exam Centre Incident Report Form, and the Exam Centre Feedback Form, and what the difference is between the two. MT noted the Feedback Form is intended to provide feedback to the IFoA for considerations when making future centre bookings, but would not be used for the consideration of marking or results. MT noted that Mitigating Circumstances is the correct form to use where an individual believes a factor such as an exam centre incident should be taken into consideration in their results. The IFoA rarely makes global adjustments based on centre issues, as these affect candidates in different ways. It should be noted that invigilators are not always aware what forms are available to students. It was noted that this should be included as part of the invigilator instructions, and as part of the instructions to candidates for exams so that it can be covered on each exam occasion and so that students can become familiar with the different forms</p> <p>Qualification</p> <p>Question raised on how will Brexit affect the IFoA qualification – MT will take this question to the appropriate team</p> |
| 3 | <p>Proposed date of next meeting</p> <p>June 2020</p> |