



South East Asia – Global Student Consultative Forum

Wednesday 23rd June 2021: 10:00 to 11:30 BST GMT

Attending:	Quality Manager – Matt Tennant (MT) Senior Quality Executive – Ellie James (EJ) Heting Yang- Lead Representative (HY) Yong Shern Leong- Student Representative (YSL) Melissa Koay- Student Representative (MK) Napoom Suwannapoom- Student Representative (NS) Bing Yan- Student Representative (BY)	Apologies:	Sithira Paranchothi- Student Representative (SP) Aditi Sodhi- Student Representative (AS)
Item	Discussion Points	Actions	
1	Introduction Welcome to all and to new members of the forum. NS during their introduction made reference to Thailand's exam background; many people take SOA exams and it is a struggle to find actual members who take IFoA exams. General feedback is a language barrier. People like to take more technical/mathematical exams and IFoA exams are more written based exams. Many feel SOA exams are easier as they won't be graded on their English as much. MT confirmed that this topic should be covered later in the meeting when an update on IFoA changes/updates will be discussed.	N/A	
2	Notes/Updates from previous meeting Notes were approved Action 1 MT to enquire about does the IFoA capture graduate salaries for benchmarking MT confirmed that the IFoA does not collect any data on Graduate details. However MT has been able to identify two company's based in the UK who have conducted benchmarking for graduate entry salaries for actuaries who joined companies after qualification or close after completing graduate qualification schemes. MT confirmed this can be sent around with the minutes and notes from the meeting.		

Item	Discussion Points	Actions
3	Student Comments	
3.1	<p>Exam Booking (Including Exam Fees & Pre-Exam Communication)</p> <p>BY raised comments about Time Zones and whether or not the IFoA could offer more options for times when booking. Also BY wanted to discuss the IFoA future plans for hosting exams, whether it will be online or paper based again. BY had confirm that it can be difficult on students from this region to have exams at night. MT noted that timings for the exams is a complex process. The exams run in UK time is due the IFoA need to ensure the integrity of exams still remains. If exams were to be available at local time, it allows for great risk of students sharing exam papers. The IFoA do try to select exams and pick times which are most suitable, certain exams do allow for multiple time cohorts to try and give more availability to members when booking. MT confirmed that exams held in 2021 (both April and September) and 2022 (both April and September) will be held online, continuing in the same format and not returning to paper based exams. MT made reference to previous America GSCF meeting where a similar question was asked about flexibility to exam times for 2022 and he made comment that in his opinion holding multiple exams on one day was limited however he would raise this internally. BT asked if more time options can be given to accounting exam papers or even 4 options for CM1. Action MT to add this feedback to the America's forum on timing.</p> <p>NS raised issue on comparative exam fees. Many people in Thailand who join new companies take up the SOA exams initially at the entry costs are cheaper. The IFoA exams are more costly at the beginning. The SOA exams are more costly at the end. NS made some initially estimates and for 7 preliminary exam plus membership fees, it does work out to be around £5000. MT replied that exams being held with other associations vary compared the format and delivery method IFoA exams. MT advising that later in the meeting he will be discussing the learning change programme which may shed more light on what might be happening over the next two years and help assist with this raised topic.</p> <p>HY wanted to share some personal feedback in that they felt the pre-exam communications have been quite clear this time compared to when they first introduced the two step verification process.</p> <p>MT asked if he could get some further feedback on the Exam Handbook. NS provided positive feedback on this, stating the handbook had everything they needed for sitting the exam (great guide with step by step details). BY also provided positive feedback and found that as a result of having the handbook this year, there was less unanswered questions.</p> <p>HY wanted to share that they found less communication coming so close to the exam dates which helps to alleviate stress for members.</p>	MT
3.2	<p>Online Platform</p> <p>NS raised concerns with the two step verification process. He encountered an issue and try to get it resolved however could not and the team removed the verification steps for him. EJ provided a background context to the verification process and explained that in the</p>	

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	<p>past the IFoA did find that some countries did encounter issues receiving the codes/texts and could be due to messages being blocked by suppliers which is why there is an option to remove the verification if consistent issues apply.</p> <p>HY made note to the ZIP file documents and shared thanks for taking on board previous raised comments. MT confirmed that the IFoA included details on ZIP file extractor software in the Exam Handbook.</p> <p>BY wanted to raise comments regarding uploading a file at the end of the exam; and whether or not the online platform could allow members to preview their uploaded file once uploaded or before submitting could view the file they are uploading instead of matching the name. MT updated the forum advising that this issue was a reoccurring theme. The IFoA are continuously looking at ways to develop the platform for students, recently (September 2020) we have introduced email confirmations once uploaded and now we are working on allowing a preview of the script before confirming and submitting the file. MT confirmed that development is still ongoing and we are aiming to have this in place for September 2021..</p>	
3.3	<p>April Examination Questions</p> <p>MT opened the floor for feedback however did advise that some questions be unanswered until results are released, along with the examiners reports.</p> <p>No comments/issues raised</p>	
3.4	<p>Tuition</p> <p>No comments/issues raised</p>	
3.5	<p>Work Experience</p> <p>NS raised an issue regarding finding a suitable individual to 'Sign Off' their PPD records. MT confirmed that individual PPD records do not need to be signed off by a qualified Actuary and could instead be a work supervisor. However when you come to qualify, a qualified actuary would need to counter sign and confirm the application/final sign off form. MT confirmed that the actuary would need to know the full details of each PPD record but only that the details are all in line and correct.</p> <p>MT shared an updated on PPD regarding a change coming in 2022. From January 2022, the old work experience regimes (Form A/B and WBS) will be historic and will no longer be accepted for submitting their work experience applications.</p>	
3.6	<p>Student Communications</p> <p>No comments/issues raised</p>	

Item	Discussion Points	Actions
3.7	<p>Other</p> <p>No comments/issues raised</p>	
4	<p>Discussion Points</p> <p>No comments/issues raised</p>	
4.1	<p>Post-Exam Survey Results</p> <p>NS raised a comment regarding Exam Pass rates. EJ confirmed that the Examiners Report does include both the pass mark and also statistics related to that exam (how many candidates sat the exam and how many passed). NS had suggested that it would be nice to have a summary report with the states in. Action EJ/MT to ask if Pass Rate can be included in Examiners reports in the future</p>	AEJ/MT
4.2	<p>Trial of new Student Newsletter</p> <p>MT shared both formats of the student newsletter (the traditional long one and a newly modified version), requesting feedback from the forum. Majority of the forum preferred the shorter version of the Student Newsletter. A comment was received made was that if the newsletter was too long, then it would not get read.</p>	
4.3	<p>LCP Survey and Consultation</p> <p>MT gave update on the IFoA's Learning Changing Program, details of which should have been included in the recent student newsletter and online. MT highlighted that all students should have been contacted with regards to a focus group for the Learning Change Programme.</p>	
5.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>EJ raised some additional topics which were raised in the GSCF feedback form:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <p><i>Payment for exams: Last year, representatives from East Asia have raised up the suggestions to add other payment options, such as Union Pay, is there any follow-ups?</i></p> <p>MT confirmed that the IFoA are restricted with payment providers. The IFoA have recently introduced a PayPal option. We are looking at payment options for the future.</p> <p><i>CS & CM Exams: Some students took CM1/2 & CS1/2 exams reported there are insufficient time to complete the paper.</i></p> <p>MT advised that other forums raised concerns with time constraints and sitting the exams online. The 2021 papers were written with the intention of being held online, unlike the papers sat in 2020 which were adapted for an online sitting. The Pass</p> 	

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	<p>Mark is set taking into consideration a range of factors; such as difficulty of the paper, did student complete the paper in time and did students struggle in certain question area etc.</p> <p>3. <i>CP Exams: Students took CP1/2 exams asked the possibility to retain the mark of one paper in this sitting and could combine it with the other paper in the next setting.</i></p> <p>MT confirmed that the exam papers are written to be a unit and are expected that they are to be taken in the same session. Both parts are to be taken in the same sitting and the IFoA does not envisage this ruling to change any time soon.</p> <p>4. <i>PPD: Some members reported they are not able to add additional PPD record once the PPD cut-off date has passed, is it possible to provide a grace period of time to report historical records?</i></p> <p>MT confirms that once the PPD cut-off date has passed, they would be unable to amend this in their student members area. If for whatever reason, a member missed their deadline then they could contact Member services to request a back-date form which would allow candidates to complete the missing entries.</p> <p>5. <i>Online mentoring: Some student members asked if there are any online mentoring programs offered during the pandemic.</i></p> <p>MT confirms that there are no IFoA run mentoring programmes or tutorial sessions for examinations. ActEd (our external supplier) does provide support through tutoring services. The IFoA does offer some mentoring schemes however they would be more directed around careers. However MT will research into this and report the details back if any found. Action MT/EJ to investigate current IFoA mentoring & buddy schemes.</p> <p>MT's final note was to inform the forum that the SCF/GSCF forums (terms of reference, committee details, frequency etc) will be reviewed shortly.</p> <p>MT and EJ thanked members for their time and contribution and closed the meeting.</p>	<p>MT/EJ</p>

Global Consultative Forum Feedback Return Form, South East Asia April 2021 Exam Session

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To navigate to the specific feedback page, click Ctrl & the area you wish to view on the contents table above. Pages below **shaded blue** indicate IFoA or Acted response to student feedback.



Topic:	Exam Booking and Pre-Exam Correspondence: Student Feedback <i>To cover feedback and comments relating to the process of booking exams, including COVID-19 related communication and guidance.</i>
Theme 1 – Payment for exams Last year, representatives from east Asia have raised up the suggestions to add other payment options, such as Union Pay, is there any follow-ups?	
Theme 1 – IFoA response: Payment for exams <i>The IFoA are currently restricted with payment providers. The IFoA have recently introduced a PayPal option for exam booking payment which we hope candidates will find useful. We are looking at payment options for the future which should allow greater flexibility for candidates.</i>	
Exam Booking and Pre-Exam Correspondence: Planned Future Improvement Areas	
Topic:	Online Exams Platform: Student Feedback <i>For Online Platforms, this should cover technical questions e.g. equipment/software/download/upload etc.</i>
Theme 1 – SMS It has been reported candidates in China could not receive SMS during the log-in process though It could be solved after calling the IFoA.	
Theme 1 – IFoA response: SMS <i>The IFoA are aware of a number of cases in China where Members were unable to receive the SMS verification code. These incidents were investigated and alternative action was taken. We are sorry for the inconvenience this caused candidates in certain regions. The IFoA do recommend if any student member who</i>	



encounters any issues with the Online Exams Platform, that they should contact the Assessment team to help aid you (email address: Exam Support Examssupport@actuaries.org.uk).

Online Exam Platform: Planned Future Improvement Areas

Topic:

April 2021 Exam Questions: Student Feedback

To cover feedback and comments relating to exam questions.

Theme 1 – CS & CM Exams

Some students took CM1/2 & CS1/2 exams reported there are insufficient time to complete the paper.

Theme 1 – IFoA Response: CS & CM Exams

Time management:

- *All IFoA exam papers go through various levels of review, with one area of assessment considering whether they can be completed within the given time. During the marking process, if the examiners discover evidence of unanticipated time pressure, they take this into account.*
- *It is advisable for candidates to devise a time management strategy and practice it, to assist them in keeping to time per question, as best as possible.*

Theme 2 – CP Exams

Students took CP1/2 exams asked the possibility to retain the mark of one paper in this sitting and could combine it with the other paper in the next setting.

Theme 2 – IFoA Response: CP Exams

Exams with multiple elements, need to be taken and submitted at the same assessment sitting. The IFoA do not offer an option to retain marks for one element in a sitting (For Example – April) and then for them to combine with results for an exam completed in another sitting (For Example - September).



April 2021 Exam Questions: Planned Future Improvement Areas

Topic:

Work Experience Requirements: Student Feedback

To cover feedback and comments relating to Personal and Professional Development and/or Work-Based Skills, and Form A/B.

Theme 1 – PPD.

Some members reported they are not able to add additional PPD record once the PPD cut-off date has passed, is it possible to provide a grace period of time to report historical records?

Theme 1 – IFoA Response: PPD

IFoA Members are required to submit PPD on an annual basis; Each member will have a unique date (usually the date they joined the IFoA) to complete their PPD recording. If a member misses their deadline, they will no longer be able to add a PPD record for that timeframe. No grace period can be given for this. If they would like to record a PPD entry from a previous year, they would need to contact Member Services to request a backdate form.

Work Experience Requirements: Planned Future Improvement Areas



Topic:

Other: Student Feedback

To cover feedback and comments relating to any other aspects of the IFoA student experience.

Theme 1 – Online mentoring

Some student members asked if there are any online mentoring programs offered during the pandemic.

Theme 1 – IFoA Response: Online mentoring

Unfortunately there are no IFoA run mentoring programmes or tutorial sessions for examinations. ActEd (our external supplier) does provide support through tutoring services.

Student Feedback: Planned Future Improvement Areas