



Americas – Global Student Consultative Forum

Tuesday 27th November 2018 – 16:00 -17:00 (UK Time)

Blue Jeans Conference Call

Attending:	Matt Tennant (MT) – Quality Manager Caroline Taylor-Steele (CTS) – Senior Quality Executive Brian Blake (BB)– Lead Student Representative Rakesh Anand (RA) – Student Representative	Apologies:	Amarpreet Modha – Student Representative
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Item	Discussion Points	Actions
1	Welcome and Introductions	NA
2.1	Exam Centres and Online Platforms Feedback was discussed regarding issues with the size of the Toronto venue which some students felt was inadequate to hold exams. IFoA to raise these concerns with the Examinations team. BB and RA summarised the feedback they had received in relation to the CA2 & CP3 exams, which were held in September. The main difficulties students had experienced were being able to access the platform, receiving the exam papers and receiving a response from the examinations team. The IFoA had received assurance from the CP3 platform provider that any previous issues had been rectified however unfortunately this was not the case. The backup plan was to email out the examination material; however, due to new security software which had	IFoA

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	<p>been installed bulk emails out were blocked. Emails from students to the Examinations Team were also being captured by the spam filter. MT advised that despite these issue the vast majority of scripts were received and successfully uploaded. As students were all affected differently, students were asked to complete a mitigating circumstances application if they felt they were adversely affected. MT apologised on behalf of the IFoA and advised this matter was being taken seriously and has been raised at the various boards and committees. Going forward the IFoA is looking at alternative providers who can offer this service from September 2019 onwards. MT advised that the IFoA is also looking to recruit volunteers to help with stress testing the platform by testing the upload and download functionality. Further details will be made available in the Student newsletter.</p> <p>The feedback was raised regarding the timing of computer based exams in the Americas region. Due to the time difference with the UK, some students had to sit exams at 4am or 5am. MT advised that the exams were scheduled to try and accommodate the majority of exam takers however it was not possible to suit the needs of everyone which meant students in some regions would be required to sit exams during unsociable hours. As the exams are online, technical support is needed to be provided by the platform provider. RA questioned why a singular provider was used and queried whether this could be carried out by local providers in each region or a provider who was able to provide this support outside of standard working hours. MT advised that the security, functionality and usability of the platform needed to be considered. This may be something the IFoA will look at in the longer term however there are no plans for change in the immediate future.</p>	
2.2	<p>Examination Study Materials</p> <p>BB advised that actuarial firms in some Caribbean countries were starting to discontinue their study programmes resulting in some students having to fund their own study. As the cost of study materials are very expensive, BB questioned if there was any help available to students. MT advised that study support is provided by ActEd and the IFoA has no involvement in this. MT suggested that students facing these issues should be encouraged to complete the 2018 Member Survey, which is due to open tomorrow (28th November), to highlight any concerns.</p> <p>The online all-member survey will open on 28 November and will run until 21 December 2018. Email invitations will be sent out with a personalised link in order to take part on 28 November. If you don't receive this email please contact membersurvey@actuaries.org.uk.</p>	
2.3	<p>Access to Information</p> <p>BB questioned whether contact details for students in the Americas region could be shared with the representatives in order for them to send out communications to promote the forum. CTS advised that in order to share this information we would need to obtain the students permission first due to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. It was suggested that permission could be requested from students either when renewing their membership or as part of the student survey. CTS advised that the Quality Team would be happy to circulate any communications to students in the region on behalf of the forum and would continue to look at ways to make students aware of how they can get in touch.</p>	
2.4	<p>Post Exam Survey</p>	

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	<p>BB explained that some feedback was received in the student survey in relation to exam centres however it wasn't always clear which exam centres were being referred to. It was discussed that the IFoA would look at ways to encourage students to provide this information however this could not be made mandatory as all students have the right to remain anonymous and withhold such details.</p>	
2.5	<p>Other</p> <p>Exam Booking Positive feedback received from students with regards to the exam booking system. Students found the system straight forward to use. MT informed the forum that the Exam booking period for the April 2019 exams is scheduled to open on 14th January and will close on 11th February 2019. The closing date for UK students has now been brought in line with the overseas deadline resulting in all students now having the same amount of time to book on to an exam.</p> <p>Curriculum 2019 Concerns were raised regarding the increased number of computer based examinations being introduced in the new curriculum as a result of the issues students faced with CA2 and CP3 this session. As discussed earlier in the meeting, it was accepted that the IFoA was taking appropriate measures in order to prevent such issues from reoccurring and to help alleviate students concerns.</p> <p>The recorded Webinars covering Curriculum 2019 for both new and existing students can be found on the IFoA website: https://www.actuaries.org.uk/studying/curriculum-2019</p>	
2.6	<p>AOB</p> <p>ST Exemption Pairings A student had contacted the forum to raise the issue of ST exemption pairings for students applying based on their exam passes with the Institute of Actuaries of India. MT advised that this rule was in place to help ensure that a student commits to qualifying with one organisation and doesn't switch between the two during their later exams.</p>	
3	<p>Proposed date of next meeting June 2019</p>	