
ADMISSIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

BY CIRCULATION, MONDAY 30 APRIL 2018

Chair: Associate Professor Tim Wilkinson
Committee Officer: Dr Matthew Charet

T 9114 1356

E matthew.charet@sydney.edu.au
sydney.edu.au/secretariat/academic-board-committees/admissions-committee

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting 2/2018 of the Admissions Sub-Committee will be held by circulation on **Monday 30 April 2018**. The Agenda for the meeting is below.

Dr Matthew Charet
Secretary

AGENDA

	Presenter	Paper
1 STANDING ITEMS		
1.1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting	Chair	<i>attached</i>
1.2 Actions Arising	Chair	<i>verbal</i>
1.3 Report of the Chair	Chair	<i>attached</i>
2 ITEMS FOR ACTION		
2.1 Written Report on Admissions for Semester One, 2018	Verdi Arli	<i>separate circulation</i>
3 OTHER BUSINESS		
3.1 Any Other Business	Chair	

Next meeting: 2:00pm – 4:00pm, **Monday 18 June 2018**
Venue to be confirmed

Remaining 2018 Meetings:

Monday 20 August, 2pm – 4pm

Monday 8 October, 2pm – 4pm



Submission To	Admissions Sub-Committee
Date	30 April 2018
Item No	1.1

Non-Confidential

Author	Dr Matthew Charet, Executive Officer to Academic Board
Reviewer/Approver	Associate Professor Tim Wilkinson, Chair
Paper title	Minutes of the Previous Meeting
Purpose	To seek approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Admissions Sub-Committee resolve that the minutes of meeting 1/2018, held on 19 March 2018, be confirmed as a true record.

MINUTES

ADMISSIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

2:00pm – 4:00pm, Monday 19 March 2018

Room 614/616, Jane Foss Russell Building

Members Present: Associate Professor Tim Wilkinson (Chair); Wencong Chai (Head of Admissions); Peter Finneran (nominee of Director, Student Recruitment); Imogen Grant (President, SRC); Associate Professor Tony Masters (Chair, Academic Board); Mary Teague (Head, Widening Participation).

Attendees: Linda Carmichael (Information Management Officer); Dr Matthew Charet (Secretary); Felicity Kiernan (Head of Admissions (Development); Associate Professor Peter McCallum (Director, Educational Strategy) (for Item 3.2); Hugh O'Dwyer (Policy/Project Officer, DVC(Education)) (for Item 3.2).

Apologies: Kubra Chambers (Director, Planning and Information Office); Dr Melissa Hardie (Chair, Undergraduate Studies Committee); Associate Professor Michael Kertesz (Chair, Graduate Studies Committee); Professor Pip Pattison (DVC (Education)).

1/2018

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country, welcomed members and noted apologies as recorded above.

2 STANDING ITEMS

2.1 Report of the Chair

The Chair advised that he had nothing to report.

Resolution ASC 2018/1-1

That the Admissions Sub-Committee note the report of the Chair.

3 ITEMS FOR ACTION

3.1 Terms of Reference

The Chair opened discussion of this item by informing members that at its 28 November 2017 meeting, the Academic Board approved a new committee structure and endorsed draft terms of reference for the new or revised committees. The terms of reference were intended to be



Submission To	Admissions Sub-Committee
Date	30 April 2018
Item No	1.1

Non-Confidential

considered by and endorsed at the first 2018 cycle of committee meetings; hence their inclusion on the agenda for the current meeting. The final terms of reference for the four Standing Committees of the Academic Board were approved at the 6 March 2018 meeting of the Academic Board, with sub-committees now being asked to endorse their own terms of reference for approval by the parent committee.

The Chair of Academic Board provided an outline for the overarching committee structure, which falls into three broad areas: the Academic Standards & Policy Committee and Admissions Sub-Committee establishing the academic framework for the University; the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Graduate Studies Committee and HDR Scholarships Sub-Committee endorsing course approvals and candidature-related matters; and the Academic Quality Committee and HDR Examinations Sub-Committee monitoring progress against academic standards.

In discussion, the oversight of non-award courses was raised, with the Director, Educational Strategy advising that in 2017 the Academic Board approved the introduction of the *Continuing and Extra-Curricular Education Policy 2017*, which relates to Continuing Education, micro-credentialling and the like. It was observed that at present, these activities are overseen by the Board of Interdisciplinary Studies and fall outside the remit of the Academic Board. Due to this, it was agreed that there was no need to amend the Sub-Committee's terms of reference to include non-award study.

The addition of "assumed knowledge" to the admissions criteria was supported.

The Chair observed that in its previous incarnation as a full committee, the Sub-Committee included in its formal membership three Deans or their nominees, with other faculties represented by co-optation. It was agreed that decanal representation was desirable and need not include all faculties, and the Chair and Chair of Academic Board would invite representative deans to participate.

The Sub-Committee agreed to endorse the terms of reference, as amended, to the Academic Standards & Policy Committee for approval, and the Secretary undertook to circulate the amended terms of reference for noting by members.

Resolution ASC 2018/1-2

That the Admissions Sub-Committee recommend that the Academic Standards & Policy Committee endorse the Terms of Reference, as amended.

Action 1/2018: *Circulate amended terms of reference. Responsible: Secretary. Timing: Before progression to the Academic Standards & Policy Committee.*

3.2 Admissions prerequisites

Associate Professor McCallum (Director, Educational Strategy) and Mr O'Dwyer were in attendance to speak to this item, which members were advised arose from a desire to clarify and update the University's governance instruments. There is currently a degree of ambiguity over who has approval authority relating to prerequisites for admission (whether Academic Board or Faculty); there are inconsistencies between undergraduate and postgraduate admission requirements for English language proficiency; and there is currently a policy gap between how recent school leavers (RSL) and non-recent school leavers (NRSL) are handled. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) has recommended that the Academic Board be confirmed as the approving body for prerequisites and calls for the initiation of discussion to clarify the identified gaps.

In discussion, the authority for setting pre-published ATARs was raised, with agreement that as these are a key standard for admission, authority should lie with the Academic Board relying on the academic expertise in the faculties. Members were informed that the creation of a Coursework Admissions Policy and procedures from material currently located in other policies, is supported by the Office of General Counsel. The development of such documents has been initiated by the Education Portfolio, with draft policy and procedures anticipated to be presented to the Academic Board before the end of 2018. HDR admissions will remain as presently in the *HDR Rule*.

It is recommended that Mathematics prerequisites be captured in a separate document, and that these should be approved by the Academic Board on the recommendation of faculties. Mathematics requirements for international and domestic students are also currently different, so this will need to be examined and cleaned up over time, with agreement that it is desirable to have uniform admission standards for all students. Options are also being explored for students who do not have



Submission To	Admissions Sub-Committee
Date	30 April 2018
Item No	1.1

Non-Confidential

the Mathematics prerequisite, and for the treatment of NRSL students in this regard. Ms Kiernan advised that based on admissions to date, the schools that do not offer 2 Unit Mathematics do not produce students with ATARs that are competitive for admission to the University. Nevertheless this is an issue we should address.

Members agreed that the University needs a transparent means to determine admission standards (including allowances under the special admissions pathways), and it was further agreed that the Academic Board should have authority in this area.

The Sub-Committee supported the proposed policy amendments and for further work to be undertaken to address the identified policy and procedural gaps. It was further agreed that the Chair and Director, Educational Strategy would recommend the composition of a working group to examine the issues raised.

Resolution ASC 2018/1-3

That the Admissions Sub-Committee endorse:

- (1) *the in-principle amendment of the Coursework Policy 2014 to clarify the role of the Academic Board in overseeing admissions prerequisites;*
- (2) *the update of mathematics admissions standards;*
- (3) *changing the policy framework for admissions, including the introduction of admissions procedures; and*
- (4) *the convening of a Working Party to consider whether policy changes are required to address the differences between:*
 - *undergraduate and graduate English language requirements;*
 - *recent and non-recent school leaver admissions requirements; and*
 - *domestic and international student entry requirements.*

3.3 Science: E12 in combined science degrees

In discussion, it was agreed that the executive summary for the proposal should be amended to remove reference to rural background and medical circumstances being considered for E12 admission as these are not included in E12 (which is based on low-SES or financial hardship); subject to the making of this amendment, the proposal was endorsed for presentation to the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Resolution ASC 2018/1/44

That the Admissions Sub-Committee recommend that the Undergraduate Studies Committee:

- (1) *recommend that the Academic Board approve the proposal from the Faculty of Science to allow students to enter the Bachelor of Science / Doctor of Dental Medicine and Bachelor of Science / Doctor of Medicine via the E12 alternative entry pathway; and*
- (2) *approve the amendment of faculty and course resolutions arising from this proposal, with effect from 1 January 2019.*

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5 OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Any Other Business

Members were advised that Felicity Kiernan will be on leave from the end of May until the end of September.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3:39pm.

Next meeting: 2:00pm – 4:00pm, **Monday 30 April 2018**
Venue to be confirmed

The agenda and papers for this meeting are available from sydney.edu.au/secretariat/pdfs/academic-board-committees/admissions/2018/20180319-ASC-Agenda-Pack.pdf.



Non-Confidential

Submission To	Admissions Sub-Committee
Date	30 April 2018
Item No	1.3

Author	Associate Professor Tim Wilkinson (Chair)
Reviewer/Approver	Associate Professor Tim Wilkinson (Chair)
Paper title	Report of the Chair
Purpose	To provide members of the Admissions Sub-Committee with information provided by the Chair.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Admissions Committee note the Report of the Chair, as presented.

REVIEW OF ADMISSIONS POLICY

At our last meeting, we agree to form a small working party to consider possible changes to admission policies, with particular focus on the process for setting and approving pre-requisites and entrance criteria, and differences between entrance cut-offs for domestic vs international, and recent vs non-recent school leavers.

We discussed the option of a (new) standalone "Coursework Admissions" policy versus maintaining the current situation of the admissions clauses sitting within the *Coursework Policy 2014*. Discussions with OGC have indicated the preferred approach is to keep a single document which encompasses the administrative requirements for coursework from admission to exit.

The possible terms of reference (exact details to be finalised) are:

- (1) To appropriately document in policy and procedures the authorised delegation to approve pre-requisites for courses, and to specify in policy and procedures the pre-requisites currently approved and the list of degrees to which they apply
- (2) To review admissions policy on English pre-requisites (IELTS or equivalent)
- (3) To review policy and identify policy gaps in relation to admission scores and other criteria to be used in the case of recent vs non-recent school leavers; and domestic vs international students; and
- (4) To review policy and identify policy gaps in relation to special admission schemes.

The Chair is currently contacting potential members of this (small) working group, but it is intended to contain a mix of academic and professional staff with suitable knowledge and experience in admissions.

RECENT MEDIA ON ATAR

The Chair draws your attention to recent media reports on ATAR and STEM. Preparing students for the careers of tomorrow and university admission processes are both important and complex issues. While media stories by necessity need to be topical, catchy and avoid excessive detail, they are one very important way our high school students, teachers and parents learn about these processes, and we should be mindful of public perceptions.

There has been considerable debate over the promotion of STEM versus humanities at high school, and the perceptions of how ATAR works. The most telling article involved the comments of the Chief Scientist concerning public perceptions of ATAR, and regardless of whether the complex mathematical algorithms of ATAR calculation are designed to create equity between subjects, the focus appears to be that many focus on perceived ATAR optimisation at the expense of picking high school subjects to prepare a student for their possible future careers.



Submission To	Admissions Sub-Committee
Date	30 April 2018
Item No	1.3

Non-Confidential

- ATAR should be simplified or even abolished, says chief scientist Alan Finkel
(<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/atar-should-be-simplified-or-even-abolished-says-chief-scientist-alan-finkel-20180423-p4zb74.html>)
- ATAR scaling wiping out HSC languages, study finds
(<https://www.smh.com.au/education/atar-scaling-wiping-out-hsc-languages-study-finds-20180417-p4za3k.html>)
- STEM review: Schools and universities are sending the 'wrong signals' to students, chief scientist finds
(<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/stem-review-schools-and-universities-are-sending-the-wrong-signals-to-students-chief-scientist-finds-20180420-p4zasn.html>)
- STEM has become a buzzword and a fad: NSW education minister
(<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/stem-has-become-a-buzzword-and-a-fad-nsw-education-minister-20180321-p4z5iw.html>)