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**Engineering Professors’ Council**

**Minutes of the meeting of the**

**Recruitment and Admissions Committee (RAC)**

**held on 3rd April 2023 via Zoom**

## Present via Zoom

Steve Bullock (SB), Georgina Harris (GH), Martin Eason (ME), Johnny Rich (JR), Gillian Laird (GL), Dave Allan (DA) and Mike Bramhall (MB)

***With***  
Stella Fowler (SF) and Rhian Todd (RT)

## Apologies

Geoff Parks (GP) and Richard Morgan (RM)

SB welcomed GL to the committee and members introduced themselves.

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|  |  | **Action ref** |
| ***1.*** | ***Apologies for absence*** |  |
|  | Apologies were received and noted as above. |  |
| ***2.*** | ***Minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2023*** |  |
|  | The minutes of the previous meeting of the Recruitment and Admissions Committee held 30th January were **approved**.  Draft watermark to be removed and final minutes to be loaded to website**. Action: RT**  At the last meeting the committee discussed and agreed SF should check what gender classifications UCAS and HESA use. SF reported back that they use male, female and other. SB requested this be added as a future agenda item for further discussion.  **Action: RT** | **2304-01**  **2304-02** |
| ***3.*** | ***Matters arising (not covered elsewhere in the agenda)*** |  |
|  | Recruitment and Admissions toolkit  JR said he did not add this to the already busy agenda. The toolkit on the website is out of date. SB proposes archiving the toolkit and the committee agrees. JR said when staff resources allows this can be revisited. RT to archive the toolkit and add a note to the page – this was created in (date) but has been left here for archive purposes’.  **Action: RT**  JR suggested this be a topic for discussion at the next Forum. SB agreed this would be timely. | **2304-03** |
| ***4.*** | ***Recruitment and Admissions Forum Planning*** |  |
|  | JR said we need the results of the survey SF is planning before making too many decisions. SF drafted a survey last week and could circulate this to members next week. JR said we wouldn’t start planning until Congress has happened but it would be good to have a venue/date agreed prior to that. SF shared her screen and showed the committee the draft questionnaire. SB asked SF to circulate a copy to all committee members for comment. **Action: SF**  SB asked what the biggest topical points are at the moment in terms of a theme for the Forum. JR suggested the OfS’s new risk-based approach to equality of opportunity. GH asked about the date for TEF responses. JR asked if TEF falls under the remit of the EES committee. GH thinks the impact of TEF will influence R&A. GH suggested inviting someone from the OfS to speak at the Forum. JR said OfS will not unusually attend events as speakers at the moment. The exception to the rule is John Blake but he is in high demand. GH asked if there will be a response by then from the House of Lords inquiry. JR said following the committee’s discussion, maybe the Forum should focus on ‘operating with shifting sands’.  The way regulatory and policy environments are shifting.   * TEF * EOR * Skills shortage * LLE * New apprenticeships   JR then suggested ‘Shifting uncertainties’.  GH suggested ‘Navigating Uncertainty: Strategies for Effective Student Recruitment in a Dynamic World’.  ME asked if there is any feedback yet on new apprenticeships. JR said this should be part of the forum agenda. Maybe Lord Willets will be willing to speak. | **2304-04** |
| ***5.*** | ***Enrolment Survey Planning*** |  |
|  | SF did not have an update at present. |  |
| ***6.*** | ***UCAS Consultation Response*** |  |
|  | JR referred to the draft response included in the meeting papers and asked the committee to approve the response. SB agreed the response captured what had been discussed at previous meetings. The committee approved the response. SF to submit the response.  **Action: SF** | **2304-05** |
| ***7.*** | ***Neurodiversity in engineering admissions*** |  |
|  | SF said she had created a paper in response to the discussion at the last meeting. She said there isn’t a great deal of data available. The headline assumption is that engineering students are likely to be autistic or identify as autistic. SF said the data suggested otherwise. SF suggested this would be a good piece of work for the EPC as there is inadequate data available. JR, SF and Lisa Brodie will be meeting in 2-3 weeks time to scope a proposal. SF said the action on the committee is to guide it. JR said he has heard multiple times that people on the spectrum are more common among engineers. If this is the case, what should we be doing to support those students so they have a good experience? We need engineers, so these members of society are highly valuable. SB said he thinks this is timely and there is now more openness to discuss this. JR said RAEng may be willing to discuss funding this work. What does that tell us about neurodiversity or engineering? What is engineering doing to support those students? Broader conclusions to draw from that? JR said we could commission a survey and get our own data. Could ask students what conditions fall into neurodiversity? What level of declaration have they made? What support have they been given? Could also then conduct research using EPC members. This could then be pulled together into a report. SB said he thinks this will span into EES. ME asked if we need to put together guidance on what we class as neurodiversity? SF mentioned covid exacerbation, in schools the removal of masking by sudden changes has been phenomenal. Needs are now enormous in primary and secondary schools. MB said TEDI London attracts lots of neurodiverse students and staff are given annual training. MB said he adapts his training to suit those students and believes this is the solution. GH said the language is part of the problem. We need to be able to take the stigma away and give students a toolkit that will help them to succeed.  JR said the plan is to scope out a specific report and apply to RAEng to funding. JR also suggested approaching the Unite Foundation. JR said this may turn into a toolkit or a series of events or both. There may even be CPD we could offer if we partner with a provider. |  |
| ***8.*** | ***Admissions Research Project*** |  |
|  | SF gave a brief overview of paper 23/04-07. SF said the project will probably start this summer. The committee offered support. SF said she will use the committee as a sounding board in the future.  The committee NOTED the report. |  |
| ***9.*** | ***Horizon-scanning and scope of work*** |  |
|  | JR told the committee about two new consultations – EORR and NSS. NSS appears to be a technical one about how they want to change questions. JR said he hasn’t seen much of an engineering angle. JR said he has not yet looked at the EORR consultation in detail, which will fall under the scope of R&A.  SB said he wants to discuss ChatGPT separately with GH. JR said there will be a session at Congress touching on this and encouraged committee members to attend. |  |
| ***10*** | ***Other business*** |  |
|  | SB once again welcomed GL to the committee. |  |
| ***11*** | ***Date of next meeting*** |  |
|  | JR suggested having a short meeting in 6-8 weeks for Forum planning. RT to set up a doodle poll.  **Action: RT** | **2304-06** |

**Action log**

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| **Reference** | **Agreed action** | **By** |
| **2304-01** | Draft watermark to be removed and final minutes to be loaded to website**.** | **RT** |
| **2304-02** | Ongoing action – gender classification to be added as a future agenda item for further discussion. | **RT** |
| **2304-03** | RT to archive the RA toolkit. | **RT** |
| **2304-04** | SF to circulate a copy of the Forum questionnaire to the committee. | **SF** |
| **2304-05** | SF to submit the UCAS Consultation response. | **SF** |
| **2304-06** | RT to create doodle poll for meeting in 6-8 weeks. | **RT** |