5. MATURO-AGE ENTRY: CHANGE TO REQUIREMENTS FOR CALCULATION OF TWO-SUBJECT TER – REF: F23951

The Chair briefly introduced the item by advising members that one of the University's provisions for mature-aged applicants was the calculation of a Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) based on two TEE subjects in conjunction with a Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) score of at least 150 in the Multiple Choice Verbal component and 145 in the Written English component.

Mr Wayne Betts was invited to speak to the item.

Mr Betts reiterated to members that mature aged students who had sat two TEE subjects did not currently have a UWA Tertiary Entrance Rank calculated for them unless they had also sat the STAT. The use of the STAT in the calculation appeared to be a relic from a bygone era; implemented during the time when English was not included as a List One subject, in order for an applicant to satisfy the University's English Language Competence requirement prior to being considered for admission. However, with English subsequently included as a List One subject, students had, in recent years, the opportunity to meet the requirement through one of their two TEE subject choices.

A recent case was cited where a student who had achieved a TEE English score in the 70s had to be advised to go and sit the STAT in order to have a TER calculated to be considered for UWA admission.

Mr Betts further explained that UWA was the only WA institution who required this test in order to calculate a TER. Each year a number of students performed very well in their TEE subjects, but for various reasons had not taken the STAT, which meant they were ineligible for UWA admission and consequently had to take up an offer from one of the other universities.

With the University's increasingly flexible approach towards developing Mature-Age admission pathways, Mr Betts indicated it was appropriate to consider a proposal to decouple the STAT requirement from the calculation of the TER. The initiative was not about abandoning the English Language Competence requirement as applicants would still need to satisfy ELC prior to being admitted to the University, for which the STAT would continue to remain the most viable option.

Members gave unanimous support to this proposal, and

RESOLVED – 12

- to recommend to Academic Council that the STAT requirement be de-coupled from the calculation of a TER, and that:
  - for mature age students, a TER be calculated from the best two TEE/WACE subjects;
  - STAT could be used to satisfy the University's ELC requirement, but should not be compulsory for calculation of a TER.
MATURE-AGE ENTRY: CHANGE TO REQUIREMENTS FOR CALCULATION OF TWO-SUBJECT TER

Introduction
One of the University's provisions for mature-age applicants is the calculation of a TER based on two TEE/WACE subjects instead of four. Currently, the calculation of a TER is only completed when an applicant has also sat the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) and achieved a result of at least 150 in the Multiple Choice Verbal component and 145 in the Written English component. This paper proposes a decoupling of the two-subject TER calculation from the requirement to sit STAT.

The issue
The two-subject + STAT requirement ensures applicants meet the University's English Language Competence requirement through STAT, thus enabling them to choose two List 2 (quantitative subjects), if desired, for the calculation of their TER, and to satisfy prerequisites. Each year, however, a small number of applicants fail to have a UWA TER calculated because they have not sat STAT. Some of these have, in fact, satisfied UWA's ELC requirement by achieving excellent results in either English or English Literature, and have strong TERs calculated for other universities. (Other universities will calculate a two-subject TER for mature-age students, regardless of whether or not they have sat STAT.)

The failure of some otherwise well-qualified mature-age students to sit STAT has been a focus of a number of discussions with staff from mature-age colleges over the years. The advice from mature-age college staff is that a number of students change focus throughout their mature-age TEE year, as a result of rising aspirations and growing confidence. Having originally set their sights on another university, their better-than-expected performance prompts them to consider UWA. However, because many of them reach this decision late in the year, they often do not realise that, unless they register for and pass STAT, a TER for UWA will not be calculated.

Proposal
It is recommended that the STAT requirement (for ELC purposes) be decoupled from the calculation of a TER; namely:

- For mature-age students, a TER will be calculated from the best two TEE/WACE subjects;
- STAT can be used to satisfy the University's ELC requirement, but is not compulsory for calculation of a TER.

This change does not affect any other mature-age admission requirements; nor does it affect mature-age applicants' classification (Standard or Non-Standard) for Medicine and Dentistry.

Conclusion
Given the University's stated desire to diversify its student body, there is a need to modify admission requirements to accommodate a wider variety of educational backgrounds. The recently-introduced Mature-age Access Program represents a bold step in this direction. This change to admission requirements is, by comparison, a very minor development. It is not anticipated the change will result in significantly increased numbers of mature-age TEE students presenting for admission. However, it will remove a hurdle that has caused difficulties for a number of applicants.

Wayne Betts
Manager, Admissions Centre
12 August 2008