

Report for Teaching Committee on MSc Selection, Wednesday 15th March 2017

Criteria for MSc entry:

Guidance documents used by college on criteria to apply for each degree have now been updated. Agreed changes were mainly clarifications to the existing (extremely vague) guidance. We hope this will tighten things up and permit fewer borderline applicants in. Note: these are not ***changes*** to criteria (which cannot be made mid-year) but rather clarifications to the existing criteria.

Clarifications made:

The MSc in Informatics/AI guidance has been split off from the CS one to make clearer that there are distinct requirements. Other degrees have also been updated, including clarifying distinctions between MA and MSc Design Informatics. Guidance for college is that, if in doubt, refer to the selector. Updates include:

- 1. University:** Clearer criteria about how to judge the quality of the applicant's degree, based on degree class and rank of University, with special attention to Chinese universities. Top tier require minimum 2:1; second tier require minimum of high 2:1; other universities require minimum of a first class degree and check with us; (where top tier and second tier ranking are known by college, and where for China this means 985 and 211 universities, respectively).
- 2. Project:** If a student's degree included a large project, the mark on it should be at least a B. Otherwise check with us. (For all degrees)
- 3. Programming background.** Clarified and updated acceptable programming languages/experience; in particular these are now stricter for CS than AI/Inf:

For CS: Programming is **required** and is very important for MSc Computer Science. Programming course should appear on transcript. HTML and web design skills do not count towards programming. Matlab or R programming alone are not sufficient. For example: Java, Prolog, C++, C, Python, Haskell, ML.

For AI/Inf: Programming very important. Distance learning course on programming is acceptable if applicant does not have any programming course on their transcript. HTML and web design skills do not count towards programming. Students who are strong in all other criteria but lack programming should be forwarded to the MSc admissions officer for decision. Artificial Intelligence courses are technical/mathematical – need strong background in this area.

For example: Java, Prolog, C++, C, Python, Matlab, R, Haskell, ML

For CogSci: Programming experience - if applicant does not have any programming we should warn them that this is an advanced course and there may be some limitation on course choice. This will be decided in discussion with their Director of Studies when they arrive.

For example: Java, Prolog, C++, C, Lisp, Python, Matlab, R, Haskell, ML

4. English Language Levels: more evidence will be required to justify raising English levels. [Maria failed in her attempt for Design Inf, even to raise to 6.5 in each section].

Further actions:

Ajitha will continue to be responsible for looking over borderline cases as requested by College, and to further refine criteria.

Sharon will liaise with the other four selectors to ask them to start working on questionnaires, programming pre-tests, and data collection.

The main goals for this year are:

a. To send a link to short survey for students to take, following acceptance, after fee payment, to get a clearer idea what courses they might take, in order to help with planning course uptake and specialisations.

b. Provide programming pretests online to assess programming skills in week 0 as a way to help guide students into appropriate course choices and project choices, and as a way to give us data about admissions decisions.

c. Start trying to build a model of outcomes based on data from admissions. This will involve determining what data we want, talking to admissions to see if we can get it from them, and/or paying someone to do data entry. [Resource has been requested]

Helen Pain, Sharon Goldwater and Ajitha Rajan