

## **WINTER POOL 2011/2012, Clough Hall and Sidgwick Hall, Newnham College**

### ***Information for Admissions Tutors and Directors of Studies***

#### **Information Provided**

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**Please note that this year the files for Arts subjects will be located in Sidgwick Hall and the files for Science subjects will be located in Clough Hall.**

| <b>Pool Opening Times:</b> |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Tuesday 3 January 2012     | 11am to 6pm   |
| Wednesday 4 January 2012   | 9am to 6pm (Pooling with strings/tags expires at 5pm) |
| Thursday 5 January 2012    | 9am to 6pm (Subject meetings held until 5pm)          |

The Pool will open and close **promptly** at the advertised times. Please note that the Pool is **not** open when CAO staff are working in Newnham College to set up/dismantle the Pool.

| <b>Pool Interview Dates:</b> |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Thursday 12 January 2012     | ASNC, Archaeology & Anthropology, Architecture, Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, Classics, Computer Science, English, Mathematics, Music, Philosophy, Theology & Religious Studies. |
| Friday 13 January 2012       | History, History of Art, Law, MML, Geography, Land Economy, Linguistics, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Natural Sciences (first day).  |
| Saturday 14 January 2012     | Economics, Engineering, Natural Sciences (second day), PPS.  |

## POOLING CRITERIA

The wording for the overall grading scheme for interviewer reports, agreed by the Admissions Forum in 2002 (and modified in 2004), should ensure greater consistency between Colleges in deciding which applicants to pool. The following overall grading scheme should be adopted, and used as a basis for pooling decisions:

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 10 | Exceptional applicant – must take       |
| 9  | Very strong – definitely worth an offer |
| 8  | Strong – worth an offer                 |
| 7  | Probably worth an offer                 |
| 6  | Possibly worth an offer                 |
| 5  | Doubtful for an offer                   |
| 4  | Weak                                    |
| 3  | and below, probably unacceptable        |

Since 2004 the Admissions Forum has regularly reviewed the operation of the Winter Pool and has agreed several recommendations designed to improve its effectiveness:

1. Colleges should endeavour to ensure that their internal use of the scoring system on Interviewer Report forms accords with the “official” scale as above. All references to pooling decisions should be removed from the official scoring system on Interviewer Report forms.
2. There are four identified categories for pooling:

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>A</b> | <i>Recommendation:</i> If places are available, this applicant is <b>strongly recommended</b> [applicants pooled with tags/strings should normally be in this category] |
| <b>B</b> | Looked weaker on paper but impressed at interview   |
| <b>P</b> | Met compulsory pooling criteria   |
| <b>S</b> | Applicant in special need of reassessment   |

The pool cover sheet is designed so that the category (A, B, P or S) under which an applicant is being pooled is prominently displayed. Colleges may also pool applicants who do not fall into any of the specified categories.

The criteria under which applicants might be pooled ‘**in special need of reassessment**’ (category **S**) are:

- a) **When the applicant received wildly divergent *subject* interviewer assessments** (e.g. scores of 8 and 4) – large differences between subject interviewer and general academic (formerly tutorial) interviewer assessments are not considered grounds for an applicant requiring reassessment;
- b) **When the applicant’s interviews malfunctioned;**
- c) **When the applicant was seriously disadvantaged at interview due to special circumstances** (e.g. debilitating illness or recent family bereavement).

In circumstances (b) and (c) it may well be more appropriate that the preference/allocated College takes responsibility for ensuring reassessment takes place.

3. All applicants in this round (except those for Mathematics and Medicine) who are not offered places by their preference Colleges but have attained an overall average of 93% or more in their three best AS Level subjects **MUST** be pooled in **category P** if not in another category.

In the case of post-qualification applicants the equivalent criterion is: A\*,A\*,A\* or better at A Level.

4. Post-qualification International Baccalaureate applicants (except those for Mathematics and Medicine) who have achieved **both** 41 points (or better) overall **and** 7,7,6 (or better) at Higher Level **MUST** be pooled in **category P** if not in another category.
5. Scottish applicants (except those for Mathematics and Medicine) achieving four SQA Higher grades at level

A1 **MUST** be pooled in **category P** if not in another category.

In the case of post-qualification Scottish applicants the equivalent criterion is three Advanced Higher grades at level A1.

6. Applicants interviewed overseas (except those for Medicine): all applicants who scored **8.5** or above when interviewed by the Cambridge team overseas **MUST** be pooled, and 8s and 7s at your discretion.
7. Medicine / Veterinary Medicine: pooling arrangements in these subjects are detailed in Section 2.6 of the Undergraduate Admissions Handbook and pooling decisions are made after the pre-Christmas Group/ Moderation meetings. The Subject Convenor for Veterinary Medicine is Dr Penny Watson (Emmanuel). Currently, the Chairs of the various Medicine Groups are:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Group I</b>   | Dr James Keeler (Selwyn)                |
| <b>Group II</b>  | Dr Geoff Parks (Jesus)                  |
| <b>Group III</b> | Dr Robert Henderson (Emmanuel)          |
| <b>Group IV</b>  | Dr Stephanie Ellington (Lucy Cavendish) |

## **Mature applicants**

All mature applicants who are realistically possibly worth an offer should be pooled. The criteria for this differ from those for standard-age applicants in many subjects. The four Colleges that take mature students only are able to advise. Poor results in examinations taken more than 10 years ago should not be held against applicants: recent academic achievement is important. A good command of English is essential.

Applicants with good grades in an Access course and applicants with grades over 80% in Open University courses should be pooled, as should those with good grades in other relevant equivalent qualifications.

## AGREED POLICY ON THE POOL

**All Colleges are encouraged to check the strength of pooled applicants from other Colleges before finalising their offers**, except in subjects where they really are exceptionally strong. This can be done at pre-Christmas moderation meetings and/or by pooling with Active Interest (strings/tags) the last one or two applicants on an “offer list”. Such files can easily be taken back, up until 5pm on Wednesday 4 January as long as they were marked with an ‘A’ at the start of the Pool.

Colleges should use their own discretion, especially when pooling non-standard applicants, mature students and those from very disadvantaged backgrounds.

Individual Colleges use the Pool in different ways and for different reasons. These arrangements take account of these differences and aim to provide a framework within which Colleges are free to operate according to their own philosophy.

It is the policy agreed by the Admissions Forum that:

1. Colleges should observe the timings for communication with applicants. **No offers, rejections (*other than rejections without interview*) or notices of pooling should be posted or otherwise communicated before Wednesday 4 January 2012, and then communication should take place only if the full application (including the CamSIS record) is in the possession of the College.**
2. The only mechanism for transferring applicants between Colleges is the Pool. **No applicants may be transferred directly between Colleges under any circumstances.** At its meeting in April 2010 the Admissions Forum agreed that there will be a blanket ban on pre-pool transfers in ALL subjects (including Medicine and Veterinary Medicine).
3. Colleges should make full and fair use of the Pool and observe the agreed deadlines.
4. Colleges must not make statements implying a probable course of action by another College in respect of any applicant.
5. An applicant’s preference for year of entry should be respected, although deferred offers are sometimes made as “insurance” against the loss of too many applicants after A Level results have been received. Such applicants must be placed in the Pool to give them the chance of an offer for their preferred year of entry, unless the issue was discussed in detail at interview. In the case of Engineering, it is often apparent that applicants are seeking sponsorship or gap year placements and will wish to defer if successful. In such cases, deferred offers can be made without pooling. In the event of no other College wishing to make a direct entry offer, then the preference College has priority in making a deferred entry offer. If the preference College does not wish to make a deferred entry offer, then other Colleges are able to do so.
6. **Individual subject arrangements organised by Directors of Studies’ groups must be agreed in advance by the Admissions Forum.**
7. While accepting that “political” pooling is to some extent inevitable, Colleges should recognise that pooling applicants with no realistic prospect of being made an offer by another College increases work for their own admissions staff and CAO, reduces the effectiveness of the Winter Pool by wasting the time of those “fishing”, and raises false hopes in the applicants concerned. For all these reasons, Colleges should endeavour to minimise the amount of “political” pooling.
8. The needs of the four Mature Colleges with regard to the Winter Pool are somewhat different to those of the other Colleges, and, while the numbers of mature applicants to “standard age” Colleges remain low, Colleges should continue to **pool all mature applicants possibly worth an offer.**

## WINTER POOL – OPERATION STAGE

- The Pool is open to College Senior Tutors, Subject Convenors, Admissions Tutors, Admissions Secretaries/ Officers, Directors of Studies and other authorised persons. Everyone entering Clough Hall/Sidgwick Hall will be required to sign in. The first day of the Pool is Tuesday 3 January 2011 from 11am to 6pm.
- **Files must not be removed from the Pool.**
- Limited photocopying facilities will be provided whenever possible and the cost of photocopying will be charged to the individual Colleges requiring copies. Photocopying will be for pool lists, one-off sheets etc. **not** for complete copies of applicants' files/papers; these can be reviewed at the Pool or during normal working hours in CAO from 3pm on Friday 6 January.
- **Access to the internet from the Pool.** Newnham has kindly agreed to provide internet (Lapwing) access in Clough Hall, Sidgwick Hall and the Buttery.

### Fishing Stage:

#### Wednesday 4 January 2011 (9am until 6pm) and Thursday 5 January 2011 (9am until 6pm)

The notes below outline an agreed procedure to ensure order and fairness in the Pool.

### Poolside Meetings

- 1 **All subjects must hold a poolside meeting.** Poolside meetings will take place on Thursday 5 January. Subject Convenors are asked to inform Helen Reed in CAO by no later than 21 November 2011 when they wish to hold their meetings and Colleges will be informed as soon as possible thereafter.
- 2 With the exception of Natural Sciences (both Biological and Physical) for which the Admissions Forum has agreed different arrangements, the protocol for poolside meetings will follow that set out on pages 9-10.

### Marking of Files

- 3 The preference College will have marked the files of the applicants it is pooling with one of the following marks:
  - A** Active interest but no desire to interview (such files must be so marked by the time the Pool opens)
  - I** Interview (where the preference College was unable to interview in December)
  - X** No further interest
- 4 Unless it marks the pool cover sheet with an 'A', the preference College loses all precedence from the time the Pool opens. Preference Colleges lose all claim on a file marked 'A' unless they change the mark to either 'O' or 'I' by **5pm on Wednesday 4 January 2012.**

If a preference College wishes to remove a file in order to make an offer, the CAO Pool staff **must** be informed so that the pool master list can be amended for the subject and College. The applicant will be marked as 'taken back', and the member of staff from the College will sign to confirm that they have removed the file from the Pool in order to make an offer.

- 5 All Colleges are free to inspect the file of any applicant but **no files are to be marked in advance of the relevant subject meeting**, except in the circumstances described in 4 above.
- 6 At the end of subject meetings Colleges should mark the files of applicants to whom they have made commitments as follows:
  - O** Willingness to make an offer
  - I** Active interest and desire to interview

A mark of 'O' will take precedence over a mark of 'I', unless the College marking 'I' is the preference College but has not yet interviewed the applicant.

### Post Subject Meetings

- 7 In the period between the end of a subject meeting and the closure of the Pool at 6pm Colleges can mark the file of any applicant in the relevant subject that has not been marked by any other College, on a first come first served basis. At this stage Colleges can mark such files 'O', 'I' (as in 6 above) or 'B':

**B** – this mark can be used by Colleges (other than the preference one) who wish to express an interest in applicants (especially those who might not be able to attend for further interview in person) who have not been selected as ‘O’ or ‘I’ following the poolside meeting, and whom they may or may not wish to bring into consideration **after** pool interviews. There is a limit of one such mark per subject per College. The effect of this mark will lapse automatically on 20 January. If the College that marked the file does not submit a final decision to CAO by this date the file will automatically be returned to the preference College and the marking College will have no further right to the application.

### **Communication with Applicants**

- 8 Colleges may establish a claim to an applicant by marking the file appropriately. Colleges may not, however, communicate an offer to an applicant until after the files have been checked on Friday 6 January 2012.

### **Checking Stage:**

During **Friday 6 January 2012**, all files in the Pool will be checked by CAO. An interview list will be prepared for each subject, giving the names of applicants and the Colleges that wish to interview them. A full interview list will also be circulated by e-mail to Colleges by 3.00pm on **Friday 6 January 2012**. It will **not** be possible to inspect any file during the checking stage.

# **WINTER POOL INTERVIEW ARRANGEMENTS AND FINAL DECISIONS**

## **Interviews**

Wherever possible interviews will take place from 12 to 14 January 2012 inclusive, as agreed by the Admissions Forum.

If pool interview dates conflict with the dates of modular examinations, Colleges are asked to negotiate a mutually convenient date for the interview, if possible between 11 and 16 January.

Where there are two Colleges interviewing, they are asked to liaise closely so, wherever possible, the applicant only has to come to Cambridge once. If an applicant is being interviewed by two Colleges, he or she may not be given more than two interviews per College. Wherever possible, applicants who are invited back for interview by more than one College should be given one or two joint interview(s) by both Colleges at the same time, rather than having to attend separate interviews at each College. This should particularly be striven for where either College or both would usually use more than one interview. General academic interviews (where used) would be additional to these.

Colleges should be prepared to conduct interviews at any time from 9.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 6.00pm (possibly later) on the designated days. Applicants may, in some cases, need to spend two nights in Cambridge if they are to be interviewed by two Colleges.

**NB Since a considerable amount of telephoning/e-mailing between Colleges will be required at the stage when interviews are being arranged, it is important that Admissions Tutors, Directors of Studies or their deputies are readily available on 5 and 6 January and also on the designated interview days.**

## **Interview Lists**

Colleges will receive a copy of the interview list electronically and the relevant file of each applicant listed. If the applicant is being interviewed by more than one College then a copy of the Winter Pool cover sheet and CAPO relating to that applicant will be supplied. CAO will retain the file until a final decision is reached. If Tutors wish, at this stage, to look at written work they are welcome to consult the applicant's file, CAPO and other papers at CAO in Fitzwilliam House. (Please ensure that CAO are given a little advance warning of visits for this purpose.) CAO staff will **not** have time to copy papers at this stage.

The interview lists indicate the Host College, which is responsible for contacting the applicant about the interviews and arranging overnight accommodation. The Host College is usually the first College to mark the file 'I'. The Host College arranges its own timetable of interviews, and it will be the responsibility of the other College wishing to interview that applicant to make contact with the Host College to arrange the other interview times.

Details of those applicants made offers directly from the Pool without further interview and of those being kept under active consideration (files marked 'B') will also be included on the interview lists.

## **Liaison between Colleges when arranging interviews**

Host Colleges should:

- Enquire of the other College exactly how long their interview(s) are expected to last and note that in the past it has sometimes proved very difficult to fit in all the necessary interviews if no arrangement has been made for the applicant to stay in College on the night before the interviews.
- Where an applicant is accommodated overnight, please ensure you interview them as soon as possible in the morning so that the start of interviews at the other College is not delayed unduly.
- Ensure that interview timetables are available at their own Porters' Lodge for each applicant, including information about interviews at other Colleges and the likely time that applicants will be free to leave Cambridge.
- Arrange for applicants with multiple interviews to have their interviews reasonably spaced and, if necessary, pay for taxis to the other College where the second interview follows immediately.

The other interviewing College should inform the Host College of the time and place of the interview(s) and the name of the interviewer(s).

## Final Stages

Files of applicants who have not been made an offer direct from the Pool ('O'), asked to come for interview ('I') or kept under active consideration ('B') will be returned to preference Colleges on 9 January. Files of applicants who have not been offered places after interview will be returned by **Friday 20 January 2012** or as soon as possible thereafter.

Following the interviews, it is essential that Colleges inform Helen Reed or Rachel Baker in CAO by no later than **5.30pm on Wednesday 18 January 2012** which applicants they would like to make an offer to. If no other College is interested an offer can then be made. If there is a competing College then your attention is drawn to the following notes:

### Competing Colleges

It is hoped that conflicting claims for the same applicants can, in most cases, be resolved by amicable agreement. In disputed cases, the following arrangements were agreed by the Admissions Forum in January 2006:

Each subject will have the following options when the two interviewing Colleges wish to offer a place to an applicant:

- a) a simple coin toss OR
- b) a prompt meeting to finalise Colleges by negotiation on the Monday immediately after the Winter Pool interviews have taken place.

Colleges will be informed of which approach each subject will take by 1 December 2011.

- If there are two Colleges that wish to offer to the same applicant, every effort should be made to resolve the situation by negotiation with the other Admissions Tutors involved.
- If it is impossible to reach agreement, Helen Reed in CAO should be informed, by the end of the working day following the interviews **at the latest**, of the name, subject and original preference College of the applicant in dispute, and also the name of the other contending College. Helen Reed will then liaise with the relevant Subject Convenor to ensure that the appropriate action (as detailed above) is taken.

### Final Pool Decisions

Preference Colleges are responsible for notifying unsuccessful applicants of **their final rejection** once files have been returned from the Pool. Colleges who interview in the Pool are free to write **informally** to applicants thanking them for coming to interview and saying they have not been successful, but the letter should make clear that their official rejection comes from their preference College only.

The final date for decision entry into CamSIS is **Friday 27 January 2012**, but Colleges are asked to enter decisions without delay once these have been finalised.

## POOLSIDE MEETING PROTOCOL

### Procedure

- a. Poolside meetings should normally last no longer than one hour.
- b. No files should be marked, except with an 'A', 'I' or 'X' by the preference College, until the relevant poolside meeting has taken place.
- c. Commitments to offer (O) and interview (I) shall be dealt with separately at different stages in each meeting.
- d. Applications for direct and deferred entry shall be dealt with separately at different stages in each meeting. Applications for direct entry shall be dealt with first.
- e. Before the stages of formally selecting applicants for offer or interview commence an informal information-sharing period of discussion may be held, if those attending the meeting so desire, to ascertain which applications are likely to attract most interest.
- f. The processes of formally selecting applicants for offer (O) or interview (I) will operate in rounds. In subjects that admit under 65 students a year the order in which Colleges select in each round will be determined randomly; in all other subjects, when considering applications for direct entry, the order will be determined on the basis of *need*.
- g. In subjects where the selection order is determined randomly Colleges that have made no offers to applicants in that subject prior to the Pool shall have priority over Colleges that are seeking to make further offers through the Pool. Thus, Colleges in the former category will occupy the first places in the selection order followed by Colleges in the latter category.
- h. In subjects where the basis of need is used, each College will be required to make a declaration of need by the start of the poolside meeting. This should take the form of a statement of how many of their intended offers for direct entry remain to be made (as distinct from the number of places a College wishes to fill), i.e. College X has made Y offers of the Z intended. Need will then be measured by the ratio  $(Z-Y)/Z$ . If there is uncertainty, the ratio will be calculated on the lower estimate of their remaining unfilled offers (Z-Y). The ratio shall, therefore, reflect the proportion, not the number, of offers that remain to be filled. If the ratio of need is the same for more than one College, then the order in which these Colleges select should be determined by the toss of a coin or the drawing of lots. The poolside meeting Chair shall then announce the order of choices in each round of the O phase (firm commitment to make an offer).
- i. Once Colleges have completed their selection of applicants for offers without further interview, the meeting will move to the selection of applicants to be called for interview. In subjects where the order of choices in each round is determined on the basis of need, need will be recalculated at the start of this phase of the meeting to take account of commitments to offer made in the previous phase of the meeting. If the ratio of need is the same for more than one College, then the order in which these Colleges select should again be determined by the toss of a coin or the drawing of lots. The poolside meeting Chair shall then announce the order of choices in each round of the I phase (firm commitment to interview).
- j. Except in the case of the proviso in (I), each College shall have one 'pick' in each round at the offer and interview stages. Once an applicant has been selected for offer (O) by any College (s)he shall no longer be available to any other College. Once an applicant has been selected for interview (I) by any two Colleges (s)he shall no longer be available to any other College.
- k. Consideration of deferred entry applicants should be entirely separate from and transacted after that for direct entry applicants. In all subjects the order of picking should be determined randomly. Applicants who apply for direct entry but are then available for consideration for deferred entry, having not been selected for offer or interview for direct entry, should be dealt with alongside deferred entry applicants.
- l. Colleges that only admit women should be given two choices in each round at both the offer and interview stages when fewer than 50% of applicants in any given subject are female. Biological and Physical Natural Sciences should be considered separately for this purpose. This rule will only apply for direct entry applicants, with deferred entry applicants being dealt with on the same basis for all Colleges. The determination of the gender balance for each subject for this purpose shall be based on a three-year average, including the current admissions round. CAO will advise each relevant Subject Convenor

accordingly where female-only Colleges are permitted two picks.

Female-only Colleges are not given preference over other Colleges when 50% or more of the applicants in a subject are female.

### Operational Guidelines

- m. The preferred position is that Colleges should not re-interview at the Pool stage unless the applicant is in genuine need of re-assessment or when it is in their best interest to be asked to return to Cambridge for further assessment.
- n. Colleges should strive to limit the number of interviews they wish to hold so that it is proportionate to the number of places they are looking to fill.
- o. Subjects are encouraged to interview only at one College at the Pool stage. Subjects should also strive to make fuller use of post-Pool interview comparisons with those seen at other Colleges. Subject Convenors should co-ordinate such sharing of information. In some subjects, notably the very small ones, double interviewing seems to create fewer problems and is desirable where the pool of suitably qualified applicants is small.
- p. In order to try to ensure that applicants most needy of reassessment are reassessed, the following procedure for the Winter Pool was agreed for subjects without shared interviewing arrangements
  - i. The Subject Convenor reviews the files of those pooled in **category S** (in special need of reassessment) in order to identify from among those the applicants most needy of reassessment in the interests of fairness;
  - ii. At the poolside meeting in that subject the Subject Convenor keeps track of the files of those applicants identified at stage (i) and endeavours to persuade those Colleges fishing the Pool in that subject to interview these applicants along with any other applicants they have selected for interview.

The Admissions Forum hopes that if applicants pooled in **category S** are genuinely deserving of reassessment then their numbers should be relatively small and it should be well worth a pool-fishing College looking at them alongside others they have chosen to interview. This being the case, the procedure detailed above should not be unduly burdensome on any of the parties concerned.