

From: Davis, Paul
Sent: 07 December 2018 16:48
To: Crawford, Catherine J
Cc: Pretty, Jules N; Morris, Bryn; Morgan, Susie; Limerick, Sara S S; Eacott, Madeline J; Parker, Katherine M
Subject: SAMT scores
Importance: High

Dear Cathy,

Following your recent correspondence about SAMT scores, I writing on behalf of the three recipients, as Secretary to Academic Staffing Committee, to answer your queries.

We would like to reiterate that SAMT scores are considered only for decisions on Permanency and Promotion, and are used by the entire ASC, the membership of which is drawn from across the University. SAMTs are only one measure of evidence drawn from a broad range of information available about individual educational performance, including peer observation, reflective practice, Cadenza and PGCHEP attainments, and the development of teaching materials. It is important to note that no application for either permanency or promotion has ever been declined based on the evidence of SAMT. It is also important to note that, where SAMT scores are discussed at Academic Staffing Committee in relation to applications, the scores are always given context, usually favourably where they are lower than might be expected, which is to the applicant's advantage.

The University will be open to the possibility of exploring whether this contextual element might be refined or improved further, perhaps by making reference to /comparison with more detailed SAMT data at departmental, faculty or University levels, in order to give a better picture of the individual's achievements. It is worth reiterating that SAMT scores are routinely used in a positive way, with commendation made in the outcome letters for evidence of good student satisfaction ratings.

I have noted your questions of 28 November about whether SAMT scores are optional. I can confirm that whilst the submission of SAMT data is strongly encouraged in both the published criteria for Promotion and Probation decisions, and in the application forms, **Academic Staffing Committee would not be overly concerned were an application for either permanency or promotion to be submitted without SAMT data**, provided that alternative evidence were submitted to demonstrate the necessary attainment. It is simply the case that the SAMT data provides a readily-available and readily-understood means of conveying success to the Committee. On this basis, the use of SAMT cannot be said to be mandatory, and it follows from this that **individual staff members may choose not to make reference to SAMT scores**, providing that they are able to demonstrate achievement otherwise.

We would like to confirm that the University of Essex is cognisant of the union's concerns, and that the raising of this has led to a period of reflection about the value of these data in staffing decisions. Care will continue to be taken by Academic Staffing Committee to ensure that bias does not enter decision making, or that disproportionate focus is given to this measure above others. **We would like to confirm that the University does not consider the use of SAMT scores to be unfair**. The academic year 2018-19 will be viewed as an opportunity to consider student voice more generally, and the University looks forward to further dialogue with UCU colleagues on this matter. You will know from Susie Morgan that you will be invited to have an active role on the Task and Finish Group working on this area.

With regards,
Paul

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