16 June 2014

Professor Dom Geraghty
Deputy Chair of Academic Senate
University of Tasmania
Private Bag 51
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Professor Geraghty

I write as advised at the Admissions Policy Committee (APC) meeting of June 12 2014 to seek a formal decision from the University about a change to the eligibility requirements for the calculation of an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR).

I appreciated recognition in the discussion at the APC meeting that policies around the determination of an ATAR are part of the partnership between the University and the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (the Authority). This is a productive approach, consistent with the provisions of the formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University and the Authority, renewed in August 2012.

I welcomed indications of general support at the meeting for the proposition, consistent with directions identified in our MoU in August 2012, that the rules for eligibility for the calculation of an ATAR should in the future include a requirement that an eligible student has met the requirements for the award of the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE).

Following its identification in 2011 of the strategic value of this change, in June 2012 the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority discussed its strong support for this proposal, noting the importance it places on all learners’ meeting the basic standards required for the award of the TCE: the completion of the equivalent of at least two years’ post-year 10 education and meeting everyday adult standards for reading, writing, mathematics as well as use of computers and the internet.

The proportion of students receiving an ATAR who also meet the standards for the award of the TCE has been steadily increasing since 2009, reaching 94 per cent in 2013. I have attached detailed information about this.

The proposed change to eligibility rules for an ATAR should be made and promulgated at least two years before the first date at which it will be applied (so a decision made before November 2014 will not apply until December 2016).

Making this change will
• send a key message from the University to the Tasmanian community as a whole about the importance the University places on all learners’ meeting at least basic standards in reading, writing, mathematics, use of computers and the internet
• ensure that Tasmanian students with an ATAR will have completed a full program of study at both ‘year 11’ and ‘year 12’.

The proposed change will not, of course, prevent the University from considering applications from Tasmanian students who do not meet these requirements.

I would be pleased to provide any further information and analysis that may be needed to support this proposal.

Yours sincerely

Dr Reg Allen
Chief Executive Officer

Attached: Tasmanian Certificate of Education and students with an ATAR in 2013
Tasmanian Certificate of Education and students with an ATAR in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATAR range</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>With TCE</th>
<th>No TCE</th>
<th>Reason: did not demonstrate meeting TCE standard for ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>two years equivalent reading/writing mathematics use of computers and the internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to 66</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>70 (12%)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 66 up to 80</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>28 (5%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 80 up to 90</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>17 (3%)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 and over</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>7 (1%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all</td>
<td>2301</td>
<td>2179</td>
<td>122 (5%)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Virtually all of the higher achieving students did meet the requirements for the award of the TCE.

Virtually all of those who do not get the TCE have either not completed the equivalent of two years’ full-time study post-year 10 or have not demonstrated meeting the basic everyday adult mathematics standard.

Of the 58 students who did not meet the requirement to complete the equivalent of two years’ full-time study, 3 fell short by exactly one full-year subject.

Students who do not complete relevant subjects at school can demonstrate meeting the standards for everyday adult reading, writing, mathematics, use of computers and the internet through taking a ‘safety-net’ test (see http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/2215, which includes an illustration of the level of everyday adult mathematics and http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/15621 for the outcomes of a review)

\(^1\) It is possible for a student to get an ATAR of over 90 and have failed the safety net test in mathematics.