The Chair referred members to the background information in the agenda that formed the introduction to this item. She highlighted the role of the BPhil (Hons) Admissions Sub-Committee as well as the University's aim to enrol in the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) a diverse and academically outstanding cohort.

With this in mind members referred to Attachment H, ‘Review of Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) Selection Processes’, written by the Associate Director, Student Services (Admissions), in consultation with the members of the BPhil (Hons) Sub-Committee. This report addresses policy and procedural issues brought to light during the initial 2012 admissions exercise for this course. The Chair thanked Mr Betts for the work he had done in bringing this report together and opened the discussion for members’ comments.

Members reviewed each recommendation in turn. For convenience these are listed below with the discussion summarised beneath.

**Recommendation 1:**
Results from the International Student Admissions Test (ISAT) should be used to rank international student applicants whose academic results meet the BPhil (Hons) academic threshold (equivalent to ATAR of at least 98.00), effective for 2014 admissions.

Members acknowledged the challenges of ranking international applicants with a variety of qualifications to the level of precision required in the BPhil (Hons) selection process, and after brief discussion on the nature and suitability of the ISAT test, endorsed the recommendation. The Chair summarised the discussion confirming the Committee’s decision to support this recommendation.

**Recommendation 2:**
If quota considerations demand differentiation between applicants with the same ATAR at the margin of selection, the selection committee should take into consideration applicants’ Tertiary Entrance Aggregates (or notional equivalents where applicable). (Effective for 2013 admissions exercise onwards.)

Following explanation of the reasoning behind using Tertiary Entrance Aggregates the Chair summarised the Committee’s support for this recommendation. During the discussion, it was clarified that this approach would only be invoked in cases where significant numbers of applicants at the margin of selection presented with the same ATAR, so that offering to all such applicants would result in unacceptable over-enrolments in the BPhil (Hons).

**Recommendation 3:**
Where an applicant presents with a non-WACE secondary school qualification for which an equivalent ATAR is assigned, a notional TEA value will also be assigned for BPhil (Hons) ranking purposes. This value will be the lowest TEA in the range represented by the applicant’s ATAR.
Clarification was sought and given that this recommendation applies to domestic students with a secondary-school qualification other than the WA Certificate of Education. Some discussion took place as to whether assigning the lowest applicable TEA, or a TEA in the middle of the TEA/ATAR range, was most appropriate. However, it was agreed that, for the purposes of BPhil (Hons) selection, a conservative approach (therefore the assigning of the lowest applicable TEA) was warranted.

The Chair summarised the discussion confirming the Committee’s decision to support this recommendation, subject to clarification that it applied to domestic applicants.

**Recommendation 4:**
The number of additional equity places offered for the BPhil (Hons) in 2013 should be increased to seven. Notionally, there should be three places set aside for indigenous students, two places for rural students and two places for low SES students, with any unfilled places in any sub-quota reallocated at the discretion of the Selection Committee.

**Recommendation 5:**
The current eligibility criterion for consideration within the rural sub-quota should be retained; that is, completion of Year 12 at a secondary school situated more than 75kms from the state capital city.

**Recommendation 6:**
Applicants within the rural sub-quota should be ranked on a notional ATAR, adjusted according to the geographical isolation of the applicant’s school (using existing UWay methodology).

These three recommendations were treated together in discussion, as issues raised in connection with Recommendation 4 had implications for the two other recommendations.

A member queried the use of the term ‘rural’ in the original wording of Recommendation 4, noting that current Commonwealth Government practice is to use the terms ‘metropolitan’, ‘regional’ and ‘remote’. In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that there was value in ensuring that the nomenclature utilised within equity-focussed admissions initiatives aligned with the criteria against which the University reported performance to the federal government. The Associate Director, Student Services (Admissions) undertook to explore, in consultation with colleagues in Planning Services, Student Services and the BPhil (Hons) Admissions Sub-committee, the feasibility of applying modified definitions of regional and remote to this sub-quota, to align with Commonwealth Government funding initiatives. This could have a potential material impact only on Recommendation 5, outlining the eligibility criterion for inclusion in the regional and remote sub-quota; for Recommendations 4 and 6, it is merely a matter of replacing the term ‘rural’ with ‘regional and remote’.

The Chair brought the discussion on these recommendations to a close confirming the Committee’s decision to give in-principle support to Recommendations 4, 5 and 6, on the understanding by the Committee that modification to Recommendation 5 may occur following consultation on current Commonwealth Government definitions.

**Recommendation 7:**
Entry to the BPhil (Hons) should be limited to Group 1 (ATAR-only, school-leaving) applicants and UWA students who have completed 48 credit points.

This recommendation elicited wide-ranging discussion on the challenges of comparing results from a wide range of tertiary institutions, balanced with the need to maintain equitable and defensible selection processes. Some concerns were expressed at whether limiting the intake in such a way would be unfair to students who had completed first year at another institution; however, it was agreed that the difficulties of ranking non-school-leaving students within the standard BPhil (Hons) quota raised even greater equity issues. It was again acknowledged that mature-aged students who completed their first year of study at UWA would be eligible to compete for the ten ‘transfer’ places available.

Concern was also expressed at the challenges of the transfer students blending into the second year of a cohort that had formed strong bonds as a result of activities experienced during first year.

The Chair summarised the discussion confirming the Committee’s decision to support this recommendation.
Recommendation 8:
Apart from where indicated above, ranking for entry to the BPhil (Hons) for Group 1 (ATAR-only, school-leaving) applicants should continue to be based only on Year 12 academic results (ATAR/TEA or equivalent).

When facilitating the discussion on this, and the following recommendation, Mr Betts noted that, by using ATAR/TEA or equivalent measures, the current selection policy has achieved the aim to admit a diverse and academically outstanding group of students to the BPhil (Hons). It was acknowledged that, given the small number of students involved, future cohorts may not prove to be so diverse.

Members concurred that one intake did not provide sufficient data on which to make wide-ranging policy changes, which led to the final recommendation.

Recommendation 9:
A decision on whether or not to explore the introduction of supplementary entry criteria and processes for the BPhil (Hons) should be delayed until Semester One, 2013, so that evidence from both the 2012 and 2013 intakes can be taken into account.

The Chair confirmed the Committee's decision to support this recommendation.

RESOLVED - 11
To endorse, to the Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) Board of Studies recommendations in the “Review of Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) Selection Processes” document (Attachment H), noting minor wording changes and that Recommendation 5 may be updated following consideration of relevant equity criteria. The nine recommendations endorsed by the Committee are:

Recommendation 1:
Results from the International Student Admissions Test (ISAT) should be used to rank international student applicants whose academic results meet the BPhil (Hons) academic threshold (equivalent to ATAR of at least 98.00), effective for 2014 admissions.

Recommendation 2:
If quota considerations demand differentiation between applicants with the same ATAR at the margin of selection, the selection committee should take into consideration applicants’ Tertiary Entrance Aggregates (or notional equivalents where applicable). (Effective for 2013 admissions exercise onwards.)

Recommendation 3:
Where a domestic applicant presents with a non-WACE secondary school qualification for which an equivalent ATAR is assigned, a notional TEA value will also be assigned for BPhil (Hons) ranking purposes. This value will be the lowest TEA in the range represented by the applicant’s ATAR.

Recommendation 4:
The number of additional equity places offered for the BPhil (Hons) in 2013 should be increased to seven. Notionally, there should be three places set aside for indigenous students, two places for regional and remote students and two places for low-SES students, with any unfilled places in any sub-quota reallocated at the discretion of the Selection Committee.

Recommendation 5:
The current eligibility criterion for consideration within the relevant sub-quota should be retained; that is, completion of Year 12 at a secondary school situated more than 75kms from the state capital city.

Recommendation 6:
Applicants within the regional and remote sub-quota should be ranked on a notional ATAR, adjusted according to the geographical isolation of the applicant’s school (using existing UWay methodology).

Recommendation 7:
Enter to the BPhil (Hons) should be limited to Group 1 (school-leaving) applicants and UWA students who have completed 48 credit points.
Recommendation 8:
Apart from where indicated above, ranking for entry to the BPhil (Hons) for Group 1 (school-leaving) applicants should continue to be based only on Year 12 academic results (ATAR/TEA or equivalent).

Recommendation 9:
A decision to explore the introduction of supplementary entry criteria and processes for the BPhil (Hons) should be delayed until Semester One, 2013, so that evidence from both the 2012 and 2013 intakes can be taken into account.

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