

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

FACULTY OF COMPUTER SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Chairman: Dr R K Harle

Secretary: Mrs M A Sammons

Unapproved minutes for the Directors of Studies Forum held on Thursday 7 January 2016 at 14:15 in FW11 in the William Gates Building

Members:

Prof J. Bacon (JE)	Dr R. D. Mullins (JN, PET)
Dr A. R. Beresford (on sabbatical)	Prof A. Mycroft (ROB)
Prof A. F. Blackwell (DAR)	Prof L. C. Paulson (CL)
Dr P. J. Buttery (HH)	Ms D. Pounds (Manager Teaching Admin)
Dr D. Chisnall (MUR)	Dr B. G. Roberts (SID)
Prof A. Dawar (ROB)	Prof P. Robinson (CAI)
Dr J. K. Fawcett (CHU)	Dr A. C. Rice (Q)
Dr D. J. Greaves (CC)	Dr A. B. Roman (HOM)
Dr T. G. Griffin (K)	Mrs M. Sammons (Teaching Admin Asst)
Mr C. K. Hadley (G)	Dr R. Sharp (ROB)
Dr R. K. Harle (DOW,ED,F)	Dr F. M. Stajano (T)
Dr J. M. Hayman (E)	Mrs C. Stewart (Dept Sec)
Dr S. B. Holden (T)	Dr S. Taraskin (CTH)
Prof I. M. Leslie (CHR)	Dr G. Titmus (CAI)
Dr A. D. S. Madhavapeddy (PEM)	Dr C. P. Town (W)
Prof C. Mascolo (JE)(on sabbatical)	Dr R. R. Watts (SE)
Prof S. W. Moore (TH)	

1. Apologies for absence.

Dr A. R. Beresford
Prof I. M. Leslie
Prof C. Mascolo
Prof S. W. Moore
Prof A. Mycroft
Dr C. P. Town

2. Minutes of the previous meetings.

The minutes were agreed and signed.

3. Matters arising.

None.

4. Any other business.

None.

5. Admissions 2016

Review of admissions round and winter pool. Dr J. Fawcett was thanked for his work in managing the proceedings. He reported that the pool was quite active this year. In total, 135-6 offers have been made of which 21 are to female candidates. A review of the options chosen shows the following:

- 51% of applicants were offered the 75% CS option- a smaller percentage than the percentage of applicants for this option.
 - 22% were offered CS with Maths. These offers are conditional on achieving STEP and are likely to reduce by half.
 - 23% were offered CS with NST- far fewer than in previous years.
 - 3% were offered CS with PBS – similar to previous years.
- The ratio of first-choice college offers is the same as in previous years but less students from the pool received offers of CS with NST. Female applicants were more successful from the pool than from first-choice colleges although the increase was very slight. We estimate there will be 50 – 60 students (just over half the cohort) who will take the new 75% option from October 2016.

6. Admissions Testing

Terms of Reference for Admissions Test Working Group. It has been agreed to establish a working group to review CSAT. Their remit is to focus on proceedings for just next year rather than plan for the future. In conjunction with CAO, it is intended to write to schools by mid-February and publish a sample test in mid-March.

The working group is asked to report back to this forum in mid-March. The following points will be considered:

Structure
Content
Delivery
Administration

Members raised several points of concern and made the following suggestions:

- There should be an even coverage of syllabus topics to ensure overseas candidates were not disadvantaged by a different education system.
- It was recommended we should collate statistics on the effectiveness of the test. Validation could be undertaken by external bodies.
- Should funding be requested from colleges? Currently, graduate students are remunerated for marking STEP and TSA tests.

Members of the working group are

Dr A. B. Roman (Chair)
Dr D. Chisnall
Dr J. K. Fawcett
Dr S. B. Holden
Prof A. Mycroft
Dr A. C. Rice
Dr R. R. Watts

The response to the admission test has been very positive and the Forum agreed it was a considerable improvement on previous arrangements. The website is outstanding. Comments from Prof I. Leslie are referred to the working group for their consideration.

7. **Revisions to the Marking and Classing document.** The intention of the revision is to improve the Computer Science Baxter score to bring it in line with the University average. Classing boundaries in IA will now be set by our examiners rather than being linked to NST results. The Forum very much welcomed the changes and there is anecdotal evidence that students do. Some concern was raised about asking

assessors to achieve a median mark of 13 for each question but a majority of members felt this ensured more uniformity of marks between questions.

8. Arrangements for IA, 2016-17.

- i. **Syllabus.** The topics are outlined in the CST new regulations document (see papers).
- ii. **Timetable.** Most of the new paper 3 will now be taught in the afternoons to accommodate more practical work.
- iii. **Pre-arrival course.** This proved very successful and will be taken by all students again next year. Students may only proceed onto the 75% option if they are successful in passing the course. The course will also contain a probability module which is a pre-requisite for Paper 3 Machine learning with real world data. This module can be completed in Michaelmas/Lent vacation.
- iv. **Exams.** The proposed exam timetable will cause minimum disruption to NST. Only a CST student taking NST Earth Sciences, of which we have very few (if any) each year, will have a clash and will need to be chaperoned. This was thought to be preferable to students taking CST Paper 2 and NST maths (taken by all students) on the same day.

Date of next meeting Tuesday 28 June 2016 at 10.00am in FW11. An additional meeting will also be held in mid-March to consider the findings of the working group on the admissions test.