

**University of Cambridge Computer Laboratory
Teaching Committee**

Chairman: Dr Neil Dodgson

Secretary: Mrs Fiona Billingsley

Minutes of the meeting of the Teaching Committee held on Tuesday 20
February 2007 in FC22 in the William Gates Building

Present:	Dr Neil Dodgson	Dr Ann Copestake	Dr Sean Holden
	Dr Frank King	Christine Northeast	Prof Andy Pitts
	Dr Ian Wassell	Mrs Fiona Billingsley	

1. Apologies for absence

None received

2. Sabbatical Leave and substitute teaching

Nothing to report

3. Review of course feedback

It was noted that all course feedback received can be viewed online at: <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/lr/review> A summary of the responses received for the Michaelmas Term courses was provided by Dr Dodgson (TC07/01). Eleven of the thirty-three courses had sufficient responses to exceed the Committee's threshold for consideration (≥ 10 for main Tripos courses, ≥ 5 for Diploma/II(General) only courses). Of these, three courses were of concern to the Committee: Digital Electronics (IA/Dip/II(General)), Operating Systems (IA), Prolog (IB). With regard to Digital Electronics, Dr Wassell reported that this year he had used the previous lecturer's notes and found he needed to add material he felt was missing. It was agreed that Dr Wassell will look at the various comments received and revise the notes to make them complete for next year. The committee will monitor the course next year. It was noted that Dr Richards lectured Operating Systems as a one-off this year while Dr Hand was on leave. Dr Hand will replace Dr Richards next year. It was noted that the committee were minded to ask Andy Rice to lecture Prolog next year, for reasons other than the student feedback (i.e. providing lecturing experience to post-doctoral research workers). Dr Dodgson will communicate further with him. Dr Dodgson will provide feedback to the students on how their feedback has been used, including information about the Part IA Hardware Practical Laboratories (see minutes of previous meeting).

4. Review of staff-student consultative committee (SSCOM) minutes

Minutes of the meeting of 29 November 2006 are now available at http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/Teaching/SSCOM/Minutes_2006-11-29.htm

There is nothing in the minutes of that meeting that requires this Committee's attention.

However, Dr Holden reported that subsequent to the last meeting on 31 January, it became apparent that a student representative had recorded that meeting without seeking or receiving consent from the committee members. Concern had been expressed by some on that committee (both staff and students) that knowing that a meeting might be being recorded dramatically changes what they would be willing to say. The Teaching Committee agreed that, as a general principle, it is unacceptable to record meetings without the written consent of all present. The Committee recommend that all SSCOM members (both staff and students) be asked to sign a written undertaking not to record meetings, that anyone refusing to sign such an undertaking

be asked to leave the meeting, and that should such a person refuse to leave a meeting, the meeting be adjourned.

5. Revision of the Tripos and Diploma

The committee considered draft ordinances (from Dr Dodgson) and a draft syllabus (from Dr Blackwell) for the Design & Innovation option (TC07/02 & TC07/03). The Committee agreed to put on hold the changes to ordinances for 2007–08 because the Committee has major concerns with the draft syllabus. Dr Dodgson will feed back the Committee's concerns to Dr Blackwell.

6. Development of the new MPhil in Computer Science

Nothing to report

7. Liaison with the MPhil in CSTIT

Nothing to report

8. Proposals for new courses, significant changes to courses, and removal of courses

Nothing to report

9. Review of the Tripos system

A paper has been received from the General Board's Education Committee. A draft response by Dr Dodgson was discussed by the Committee and minor changes were suggested (TC07/04). This now goes to the Faculty Board for approval.

10. Examination Questions

It was noted that past experience shows little take up of examination questions on Semantics in Part IB. This has been of concern to the Committee and to other assessors who feel that they have had to take an unreasonably high share of the load of marking. At the request of Prof. Mycroft and Dr Dodgson, Dr Fiore prepared a confidential report on this year's examination questions. The report contained positive feedback and Dr Dodgson was happy with the Semantics examination questions.

A longer discussion ensued about ways in which consistency in difficulty could be assured across all questions in an examination paper. The Committee agreed that it important that Examiners aim to ensure consistency in difficulty across an examination paper, as best they can, and that they should be reminded that they have ultimate authority to modify examination questions.

11. Timetable for 2007-08

Dr King presented a first draft of next year's timetable for discussion (TC07/05). There are a number of minor changes. The major changes are the removal of Discrete Mathematics I from Part IA, the return of Probability to Part IA, and the removal of Natural Language Processing from the Diploma/Part II(General). Dr King will revise the timetable in light of the Committee's feedback and circulate a new version.

12. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were signed and approved.

13. Any matters arising not already dealt with

None arising

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on 20th March 2007.