

**University of Cambridge**  
**Faculty of Computer Science and Technology**

Chairman: Dr Robin Walker

Secretary: Mrs Megan Sammons

Minutes of the meeting of the Directors of Studies Forum held on Tuesday 8 January 2013 at  
14:15 in FW26

Present

Dr A R Beresford (R)	Dr R D Mullins (JN)
Dr A F Blackwell (D)	Dr S J Murdoch (CHR)
Dr A N Donnelly (PEM)	Dr A Norman (PET&T)
Dr J K Fawcett (Chu)	Prof L C Paulson (CL)
Dr D J Greaves (CC)	Ms D E Pounds (Teaching Admin Manager)
Mr C K Hadley (G&SID)	Prof P Robinson (CAI)
Dr R K Harle (D&F)	Dr A C Rice (Q) Observer
Dr J M Hayman (E)	Dr B Roman (H)
Dr S B Holden (T)	Mrs M A Sammons (Teaching Admin Asst)
Prof A Hopper (HoD)	Dr R D H Walker (Q)
Prof I M Leslie (CHR)	Dr R Watts (SE)
Mrs M A Levitt (Dept Administrator)	

**1. Apologies for absence**

Prof J M Bacon (J), Dr P J Buttery (HH), Dr T E Forster (CLH), Dr K Moody (K), Dr S Taraskin (CTH), Dr G Titmus (CAI), Dr C P Town (W).

**2. Matters arising**

The request from some colleges for common admission questions has not been realised for the current admissions round. Common use of TSA or a replacement test and a suggestion for a unified January progress test for Part IA students were also considered. The matter is deferred to the July 2013 meeting for further discussion.

The Chair also expressed concern that some overseas student's interview comments are very unsatisfactory and interviews are often not conducted by a computer scientist. Colleges would welcome volunteers to assist in overseas interviewing

**3. Notification of any other business**

Siemens undergraduate sponsorship scheme. The Chair drew member's attention to the information sent in his email of 08/01/2013.

**4. Review of applicants for 2013 and the winter pool**

Report from Dr Robert Harle, Part IA co-ordinator. Dr Harle felt the quality of candidates was stronger this year. The anticipated intake is 95, based on past statistics. This has implications for the department for practical classes. The members felt it would be useful to analyse the reasons why 20 students did not take up their offer last year. **Action RKH- to provide Chair with lists of names from last year.**

## 5. **Changes to Part IA course content**

Feedback from the Part IA discussion group concludes that there should not be a complete overhaul of Part IA. The course only requires refreshing. Feedback from the Oxbridge Conferences indicated that students would prefer not to study NST with CS. Revision of Part IA will be further discussed by the CST Tripos Management Committee.

## 6. **Handling of CS with Maths applicants**

Members expressed concern at the inconsistency of approach amongst the colleges which was considered to disadvantage some candidates.

### **Afternote: Dr Harle proposes the following recommendation and requested comments and suggestions**

#### **Recommendation:**

##### **Issues:**

The CST (with whatever option) is a single course with a single UCAS entry code. There is evidence that many candidates who apply for CS with Maths do not have the appropriate mathematical ability for that option but are nonetheless suitable for CS with another option. The guideline issued a few years ago by the Admissions Forum was that such candidates be pooled rather than being made an offer with another option. This is not, however, always in their best interests since they may then miss out on an offer altogether.

Furthermore, those applicants who select CS with Maths receive an additional STEP requirement with their offer. Confusion arises if they meet their offer on all counts but the STEP offer. There is presently a lack of consistency between how the Colleges handle this, with some making dual offers with and without Maths at the outset; others pooling; and others making a new offer that excludes the maths option being taken. All of these approaches put extra stress on the applicant (the dual-offer approach cannot be handled by the UCAS system, causing confusion).

#### **Recommendation:**

We are seeking a more consistent handling of the CS with Maths applicants by the Colleges, whilst still retaining the flexibility to act in what we believe to be the applicant's best interests,

We recommend that any applicant deemed to be worthy of a CST offer receive a standard offer *without* STEP (e.g. A\*AA for A-levels). This would be the offer requirements reported to UCAS. The applicant should be advised that taking the STEP exam and scoring a certain level is necessary if they wish to take the 'with Maths' option, but this would be *strictly optional*. This achieves the advantages of the dual-offer solution without its disadvantage of not being representable in the UCAS system.

In a *minority* of cases, it may be that the College is unable to support the CS with Maths option for an applicant who has performed badly in a mathematical element of the admissions process. In this case we recommend that the DoS use his or her discretion to choose between an offer that excludes the maths option altogether and pooling the candidate. The latter option is only in the interests of the applicant if there is conflicting evidence about their mathematical abilities.

**7. Addressing the gender issue**

Members considered the current application statistics for entry in 2013 below in response to a request from the Senior Tutor's Standing Committee on Education. The statistics suggest there has been no bias against female applicants during the current admissions round.

Applicants

Total	507
Male	450
Female	57

Rejections

Total	327	64.5%
Male	296	65.7%
Female	31	54.4%

Pooled

Total	91	17.90%
Male	76	16.80%
Female	15	26.30%

Offers-prepool

Total	87	17.10%
Male	77	17.10%
Female	10	17.50%

The Chair concluded that further investigation is needed to establish why our numbers of UK female applicants are so small compared to other UK universities. This will be further discussed by the Teaching Management Committee as part of their on-going review of Part IA.

**8. Senior Tutors' Standing Committee on Education**

- i. In response to the Senior Tutor's Standing Committee comments on this Forum's minutes of January 2012, the meeting confirmed that the advertising of the fact that they were giving more supervisions than other colleges has been discussed and rectified by the relevant Director of Studies, the Senior Tutor and the Department.
- ii. Supervision data. The Chair confirmed that he did not consider the data accurate. The Chairman called the attached data into question as the sum of supervisions for Computer Science showing less than the recommended hours per student on table 4b does not match the total figure given on Table 2. The Directors of Studies felt strongly that they were offering Computer Science students the recommended number of supervision hours.

**9. Any other business**

Cohort tracking. Prof Ann Copestake confirmed that cohort tracking is only used to establish a student's examination class in borderline cases. This practice is in line with that of other departments.

**10. Date of next meeting**

The proposed date is 2 July 2013 at 10:00am.

