

**Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the  
Forum of Directors of Studies in Computer Science**

**Friday 15 January 2021 at 1430 by Zoom**

**Present**

Prof J. Bacon (JE)	Prof S. W. Moore (TH)
Prof A. R. Beresford (Q)	Dr R. D. Mullins (JN, PET)
Prof A. F. Blackwell (DAR)	Prof A. Mycroft (ROB)
Dr L. Bulat (ME, ED)	Ms H. Neal (Undergraduate Administrator)
Ms M. J. Cobby (Admin/Minutes)	Prof L. C. Paulson (CL)
Dr J. K. Fawcett (CHU,H,HH,LC,N,M,)	Ms D. Pounds (Teaching Admin Manager)
Dr D. J. Greaves (CC)	Prof P. Robinson (CAI)
Prof T. G. Griffin (K)	Dr T. M. Sauerwald (EMM)
Dr Hatice Gunes (TH)	Prof F. M. Stajano (T)
Dr R. K. Harle (DOW, F)	Mrs C. Stewart (Department Secretary)
Dr S. B. Holden (T)	Dr S. Taraskin (CTH)
Mr M. Ireland (SID)	Dr G. Titmus (CAI)
Dr T. M. Jones (CAI)	Dr C. P. Town (W, JE)
Prof S. Keshav (FITZ)	Dr R. R. Watts (SE)
Dr M. Mahmoud (K)	Dr J. Yallop (ROB)
Prof C. Mascolo (JE)	

**1 Apologies for absence**

Prof P. Buttery (CAI)  
Dr S. Cummins (GIR)  
Dr A. Hutchings (K)  
Dr N. Krishnaswami (T)  
Prof N. Lawrence (Q)  
Prof R. Mortier (on sabbatical)  
Prof S. Murdoch(CHR)  
Dr A.S. Prorok (PEM)  
Prof A. Rice (Q)  
Dr R. Sharp (ROB)  
Dr J. Vicary (K)

**2 Minutes of the meeting of 16 October 2020**

With no corrections to be made, these were signed as a correct record of the meeting.

### **3 Actions from the meeting of 16 October 2020**

- 3.1 It was confirmed that the final numbers proposed for the October 2021 intake was 152.
- 3.2 It was confirmed that 1A Natural Sciences students would now be having supervisions for every 3 hours' lectures, Computer Science students would remain at one supervision for every 4 hours' lectures. It was noted that some members found it hard to cover material and 1 – 4 was a norm only. Some students required more, some less.

### **4 Matters arising from the meeting of 16 October 2020**

There were no matters arising.

### **5 Tripos matters**

- 5.1 It was confirmed that all teaching in the Lent term would be remote, as would the summer examinations.
- 5.2 It was noted and agreed that students would need to be told in advance that the examinations would be open-book and that they should be provided with the guidance given to exam-setters in order to know what style to expect. This was particularly important as the style would differ from that used last year and students could legitimately expect the style to be the same unless explicitly told otherwise.
- 5.3 It was suggested that if the styles were to vary from the previous year then samples of the different style should be circulated to students beforehand.
- 5.4 It was noted that clarity as to the term 'open-book' should also be sought and also clearly communicated to students.
- 5.5 It was agreed to take this discussion to the meeting of TMC on 25 January 2021.

*(action: TMC agenda item 25.01.21)*

### **5.6 1B Group Project**

- 5.6.1 It was expected that there would be queries from the students about how this was going to work this year.
- 5.6.2 The launch was to take place on 21 January online at 1100. The project would be run online throughout the term, with the expectation that students would arrange the meetings with the clients themselves, four times during the term on specified weeks.
- 5.6.3 The scope and scale of the project would be as in previous years, but without the final live presentations. Videos would be posted online instead, for voting to take place, with a live stream on 17 March to announce the prize-winners.
- 5.6.4 It was noted that there would be considerable flexibility this year to accommodate issues such as varying timezones, but that students would be expected to confirm their participation and that any who were seen not to be would be flagged up with the relevant DoS.

### **6 20/21 Admissions Round**

- 6.1 All were thanked for participating in the pool meetings and for showing that the Computer Science department was a good user of the pool, whereas other subjects had reduced numbers of offers at this stage due to fears about the grading of A levels.
- 6.2 It was confirmed that the department had made a total of 142 offers, including 6 deferrals from last year and 23 from the pool.
- 6.3 It was noted that female applications were down on the previous year but that full data was still needed from the central Admissions before final figures could be computed.

### **6.4 Feedback on remote interviews**

- 6.4.1 Surprise was expressed that roving interviews had still taken place, when there was an assumption that video interviewing would have replaced them.
- 6.4.2 It had proved to be very unsatisfactory that not all reports from the roving interviews had been received before the admissions interviews and that some colleges had completed the local interviews before the overseas interviews had finished.

### **6.5 Allocating remaining quota (or not)**

- 6.5.1 After considerable discussion it was agreed that no major changes should be proposed at this point, due to the unusual consequences of both Covid and Brexit. A paper would be circulated in the following few months to decide what to do with the final 10 places. *(action RJH)*

## **7 21/22 Admissions Round**

### **7.1 Future of CTMUA**

- 7.1.1 It was reported that CTMUA was likely to be dropped and that applicants would do MUA instead – subject to the agreement of this Forum. Although the questions on both tests were identical, CTMUA had originally been introduced as it had no fee whereas MUA carries a fee payable by the student.
- 7.1.2 Even though there were plans for a re-imbusement scheme for poorer applicants, it was considered that the fee may put off certain people from applying.
- 7.1.3 After much discussion, it was agreed that this Forum would report back to the senior tutors to say that they were unable to agree this change at this point, as they would need reassurance of the timing of MUA results and also would not wish to be the only subject charging for a pre-application test.

***(Action: JF to report back to senior tutors)***

## **8 Planning for 21/22**

- 8.1 It was noted that any decision about whether interviews would be held in person or by video would most probably be decided by each college independently.

## **9 Any Other Business**

- 9.1 There was a sense that a number of Part 2 students were experiencing anxiety due to their academic workloads and that their impression was that the assessment load for Part 2 units was higher than for Paper 7.
- 9.2 It was noted that if DoSs felt that 5 hours per week was an unreasonable expectation then representation about this should be made to TMC or Faculty Board.
- 9.3 It was considered that the overall workload seemed to be manageable but the stress around submission deadlines seemed to have increased, although the newly-introduced 12 noon deadline seemed to have been successful.
- 9.4 There was a suggestion that the presentation part of the continuous assessment could be front-loaded so that lectures would not need to continue to the end of term which would free up space for the supervisions.
- 9.5 It was agreed that these concerns should be formally expressed to TMC. ***(action: TMC agenda item 25.01.21)***
- 9.6 Members were reminded that C++ ticks for 1A needed to be submitted in ten days' time.

## **10 Date of next meeting**

Friday 30 April 2021, 1400