



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Department of Computer
Science and Technology

Minutes of the Meeting of the Directors of Studies in Computer Science Forum Friday 21 January 2022 at 1400 by Zoom

Members

Mrs Helen Averill (Teaching Admin Manager)
Dr Jean Bacon (JE)
Prof Alastair Beresford (Q)
Prof Alan Blackwell (DAR)
Dr Luana Bulat (ME, ST EDS)
Ms Marion Cobby (Admin/Minutes)
Dr Stephen Cummins (GIRTON)
Dr Carl Henrik Ek (JE)
Dr John Fawcett (CH, HOM, HH, LC, M, NEWN)
Dr David Greaves (CC)
Prof Timothy Griffin (K)
Dr Hatice Gunes (TH)
Dr Robert Harle (DOW, FITZ) (*Chair*)
Dr Sean Holden (T)
Dr Alice Hutchings (K)
Dr Matthew Ireland (SID)
Dr Timothy Jones (CAIUS)
Prof Srinivasan Keshav (FITZ)
Dr Neel Krishnaswami (T)
Prof Neil Lawrence (Q)

Prof Cecilia Mascolo (JE)
Dr Russell Moore (CAIUS)
Prof Simon Moore (TH)
Prof Richard Mortier (CHR)
Dr Robert Mullins (PET)
Prof Alan Mycroft (ROB)
Ms Helen Neal (Admin)
Prof Lawrence Paulson (CLARE)
Dr Amanda Prorok (PEM)
Dr Thomas Sauerwald (EMMA)
Dr Richard Sharp (ROB)
Professor Frank Stajano (T)
Mrs Caroline Stewart (Department Secretary)
Dr Sergei Taraskin (CATH)
Dr Christopher Town (JE, WOLF)
Dr Jamie Vicary (K)
Dr Richard Watts (SEL)
Dr Jeremy Yallop (ROB)
Dr Zheng Yuan (CC)

1 Apologies for Absence

Prof Alastair Beresford
Dr Hatice Gunes
Dr Timothy Jones
Prof Tim Griffin
Prof Cecilia Mascolo
Dr Jamie Vicary

2 Minutes of the meeting of 15 October 2021

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

3 Actions from the meeting of 15 October 2021

There were no actions from the meeting of 15 October 2021.

4 Matters arising from the meeting of 15 October 2021

There were no matters arising from the meeting of 15 October 2021.

5 Tripos matters

5.1 Lent lecture update

5.1.1 The Chair welcomed Helen Averill, Teaching Administration Manager, who had replaced Dinah Pounds following her retirement in December 2021.

5.1.2 It was reported that little had changed regarding the Tripos since last term. There had been a few issues regarding Part II units but these had now been resolved.

5.1.3 There had been a specific aim to increase in-person teaching for Lent Term which had been achieved, which had been well received by all years, especially IB students.

5.1.4 Initial feedback about the quality and efficiency of the live lecture-capture was very positive.

5.2 Supervisor shortages

5.2.1 It was reported that there had been difficulty in recruiting sufficient Part II supervisors and that this would be an on-going issue with the increase in student numbers. It was recognised that this would be a real problem in the future even though no specific plan of action had yet been devised. It was also noted that not all subjects were affected by the shortage.

6 Admissions round update (John Fawcett)

6.1 Admissions for October 2022

6.1.1 It was agreed that quotas should be decided earlier on in the process, although the full quota had not, in fact, been used which was a good outcome as it would have resulted in significant growth which would have been difficult to manage.

6.1.2 There had been 1624 applications compared to 1656 last year.

6.1.3 Applications from females had increased to 18.3%.

6.1.4 EU applications had fallen, comprising only 7.6% of the total applicants. Applicants from overseas (31%) and home (61.4%) students had increased, but at the expense of the EU, especially Ireland. This was to be expected, and in line with the rest of the university, due to higher tuition fees and the lack of availability of student loans for EU students.

- 6.1.5 It was confirmed that 119 offers had been made before the winter pool, with a further 6 for deferred entry. 17 offers had been made in the winter pool along with 4 deferred entry offers. This resulted in 10 offers already being in place for October 2022 with 136 offers outstanding, awaiting exam results. With 13 deferred offers from last year this would bring a total of 149 for October 2022 entry, although some slight activity would be expected in the adjustment and summer pool due to some offers being turned down (eg due to offers of fully-funded places at US universities and a lack of available funding for some mature students), even though the majority of these numbers would be expected to materialise due to the low cover ratio in place.
- 6.1.6 It was noted that, compared to other departments, we had made good use of the pool (for moderation and for trading) which put us in a strong position.
- 6.1.7 There would be no March admissions round as Computer Science would not be available to mature students in the March round this year, nor in the future
- 6.1.8 It was noted that the final offers could still change slightly as there were still a few pool offers to be sent out in the coming week
- 6.1.9 It was reported that there had been some mixed messages from Admissions Tutors as to whether or not bridging-course students counted in the quota. The Chair confirmed that the department was definitely quota-restricted.
- 6.2 Discussion of admissions process for 2022+**
- 6.2.1 Colleagues were urged to agree their quotas early on in the process.
- 6.2.2 The need for retaining numbers management was queried and discussed, with mixed opinions emerging. Although it was felt that it effectively no longer happened, as colleges were generally happy to go up to their quota and then stop, there was concern that increased numbers of students year on year would exacerbate the current problem of the shortage of supervisors and dilute the provision of adequate general support of the practical components of the courses and sufficient teaching spaces.
- 6.2.3 The Chair agreed to raise this as an item at the next meeting of the group, with three options to consider. 1: to decide to adopt a numbers management approach whereby the quotas suggested by each college were generally accepted as a target; 2: to have no numbers management in place as in past years, but with the risk of there being too many students to cope with; or 3: to implement a departmental numbers management process by circumventing the university approach and agreeing an internal protocol for when a college increased their target number, although some colleges would probably not participate and prefer to do their own thing. *(Action: RKH to include on next DoS Forum agenda)*
- 6.2.4 Two responses had been requested by the Admissions Forum as follows:
- 6.2.4.1 To implement now: The Admissions Forum would like a recommendation from the CST DoS committee on any written work requirements for 2023 entry – this should be collectively agreed and then requested by every college even if they don't intend to actively use them, so that it forms part of the pool file. John Fawcett agreed to email any DoS who was not present at the meeting but was not expecting any opposition as colleges do not ask for written materials in advance from Computer Science students.
- 6.2.4.2 To implement once more data available, which would be circulated to the DoS group: The Admissions Forum required an agreement of the standard entry requirements for Computer Science, to include any GCSE or A level or equivalent subject requirements, plus any pre- or at- interview assessment

requirements. These would need to be discussed and agreed at the Admissions Forum and approved by the Senior Tutors Committee in time to be incorporated into the prospectus for 2024.

6.2.4.2.1 John Fawcett reported that he had sought clarification on whether or not this included the CSAT, as this could create difficulties with Further Maths, certain IB subjects and some Chinese curriculum details.

6.2.4.2.2 It was suggested that we should perhaps not put a requirement on the TMUA even though we might still like to use the test.

6.2.4.2.3 It was agreed that this discussion should be pursued off-line as there would undoubtedly be simultaneous discussions taking place in other departments and that the data would need to be circulated to ensure that the necessary discussions could take place.

7 Examinations

7.1 Members of the group were reminded that all exams would be on-line this year – students were asking about this frequently, so it had been decided that this would be the case in Computer Science regardless of what other departments may be doing.

7.2 IB students had already made it clear that they wanted on-line exams in their final year and that they wanted the department to commit to this early on.

8 Any Other Business

8.1 Discussion and decision as to whether CSAT scores should be reflected in the SMI (subject moderation interface) (Prof Alan Mycroft, Dr Richard Sharp)

8.1.1 There was concern that as this was currently not the case, colleges who use CSAT arguably had an advantage when looking in the pool, as they could see star-pooled candidates from other CSAT colleges., whereas colleges which only see the TMUA results could miss some of the students who had been very successful in CSAT.

8.1.2 It was agreed that the CSAT should indeed be reflected in the SMI, so that all colleges could see the whole student scores and marks distribution, regardless of whether or not they subscribe to CSAT.

8.2 Request for a page at a fixed address on the CL intranet, with all relevant dates for undergraduate Directors of Studies, and possibly an ical feed (Prof Frank Stajano)

8.2.1 This was considered to be a reasonable request, as it was becoming increasingly difficult to find relevant information about timetabling and other details. (Action: RKH to raise at Departmental level)

8.3 Responsibility for Part III Students (Dr Robert Harle)

8.3.1 Members were reminded that Directors of Studies were responsible for all undergraduate students, which do include Part III students. Responsibilities included identifying projects for students, submitting supervision reports, arranging for supervision payments to be made, etc.

8.4 On-line access to course materials

8.4.1 There was concern about the lack of ease at finding course information and materials on-line which seemed to be becoming increasingly difficult.

8.4.2 It was agreed to take this issue to TMC with the aim of having an automatic link to Moodle from the departmental webpage. (Action: RKH to raise at TMC meeting on 24 January 2022)

8.5 Ticks

- 8.5.1 It was confirmed that tick requirements were to be found within the Head of Department notices on the website, for student information.
- 8.5.2 It was agreed that the ticks spreadsheet would still be circulated to Directors of Studies, in addition to the tick information being recorded on Moodle.

8.6 TMUA fees

- 8.6.1 It was confirmed that TMUA fees could be reimbursed to students who wished to claim due to financial hardship.

9 Date of next meeting: Friday 29 April 2022