

**Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of  
The Directors of Studies in Computer Science Forum  
Wednesday 5 July 2023 at 14:00 via Zoom**

**Members**

Mrs Helen Averill (Teaching Admin Manager)	Dr Russell Moore (CAI)
Prof Alan Blackwell (DAR)	Prof Simon Moore (TH)
Dr Luana Bulat (ME)	Prof Richard Mortier (CHR)
Ms Marion Cobby (Teaching Admin)	Prof Robert Mullins (JN, PET)
Dr Stephen Cummins (G)	Prof Alan Mycroft (ROB)
Dr Ramsey Faragher (Q)	Ms Helen Neal (Teaching Admin)
Dr John Fawcett (CHU, H, HH, LC, M, N)	Prof Larry Paulson (CL)
Dr David Greaves (CC)	Prof Amanda Prorok (PEM)
Prof Timothy Griffin (K)	Dr Challenger Mishra (Q)
Prof Hatice Gunes (TH)	Prof Thomas Sauerwald (EMM)
Prof Robert Harle (DOW, F) ( <i>Chair</i> )	Dr Richard Sharp (ROB)
Dr Sean Holden (T)	Prof Frank Stajano (T)
Dr Alice Hutchings (K)	Mrs Caroline Stewart (Department Secretary)
Dr Matthew Ireland (SID)	Dr Sergei Taraskin (CTH)
Prof Timothy Jones (CAI)	Dr Christopher Town (W, JE)
Prof Srinivasan Keshav (F)	Prof Jamie Vicary (K)
Dr Neel Krishnaswami (T)	Dr Richard Watts (SE)
Dr Jasmin Jahic (Q)	Dr Jeremy Yallop (ROB)
Prof Nicolas Lane (JN)	Dr Francisco Vargas (CC)
Prof Cecilia Mascolo (JE)	Prof Andreas Vlachos (F)

## **1 Apologies for absence**

1.1 Dr John Fawcett, Prof Tim Griffin, Dr Dima Szamozvancev, Prof Jamie Vicary.

## **2 Minutes of the previous meeting**

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

## **3 Update on pending actions**

3.1 It was confirmed that the impact of the TMUA deadline being before the application deadline would be monitored, for discussion at the next DoS meeting (*item 3.2.1 on previous minutes*).

3.1.1 There was nothing new to report at this stage. Prof Harle confirmed that he would talk to Dr John Fawcett off-line and would circulate any updates by email.

3.2 Summer Pool. Due to our large numbers this year the Summer pool had not been utilised last year, which was felt to be unfortunate as many good students had been missed. It was noted that it was not completely clear what could be done, but it was noted that some colleges had undershot so would probably use the Summer pool. It was suggested by Prof Frank Stajano that our numbers management could cease, due to having not met the targets, but that this would need to be agreed by the new Head of Department. Action: Prof Cecilia Mascolo and Prof Robert Harle to discuss ways to keep a number of places back for Summer pool students. It was noted that discussions have not yet taken place but that it could be considered by circulation (*action: RKH/CM*) (*item 3.4.1 on previous minutes*).

3.2.1 It was noted that the Summer Pool had now been re-named the August Re-consideration Pool (ARP).

3.2.2 The purpose of the Pool was two-fold. One was for the consideration of students who had missed the required grades but had come very close, so could be considered by another college other than their original choice. The other was for students who had not received an offer originally, but who had achieved better than expected A level results and might be reconsidered, especially if coming from a disadvantaged background.

3.2.3 It was noted that there would some numbers available this year due to atrophy as some offers had been turned down, and members of the group were advised to consider the Pool if there were any spaces available in their college (subject to approval from the senior and admissions tutors).

3.3 It was confirmed that a new Outreach administrative post was to begin in early June and that they should be part of the TMC membership. The Chair also requested outline details of the outreach plans from the Outreach Committee chairman, Prof Tim Jones (*action: TMJ*) (*item 6.13 on previous minutes*).

3.3.1 Prof Tim Jones confirmed that an Outreach Administrator, Aga Niewiadomska, had been appointed and was working on undergraduate and postgraduate outreach activities.

3.3.2 It was confirmed that the Outreach Committee would start up again in Michaelmas Term and that the membership and terms of reference were still being finalised. Any expected impact on the DoS Group would be reported at the next meeting.

3.3.3 Prof Harle reminded members of the Open Days taking place in the department over the next couple of days and that there would be a dedicated area for Directors of Studies in the Intel Lab.

3.4 Following the poll that had been put into the 'chat' at the start of the meeting it was agreed that the meetings would remain on Thursdays for the time being, but the Chair agreed to circulate to those who had not been at the meeting, on the assumption that Thursday would not be their ideal choice due them not having been able to attend on this occasion (*action: RKH*) (*item 8.1.1 on previous minutes*).

3.4.1 It was noted that there had been a general trend towards a preference for Thursdays which would start from Michaelmas Term.

#### **4 Other matters arising**

There were no other matters arising.

#### **5 Tripos matters**

##### **5.1 Supervisions and Supervisors**

5.1.1 It was reported that students were becoming more vocal about the different levels of supervision that they were receiving; it was confirmed that the awareness of differences was due in part to the increase in student numbers which resulted in equity across the level of supervisors becoming more difficult.

5.1.2 It was confirmed that the upcoming Tripos review would take this into account, also being mindful of the university's aims to increase student numbers significantly over the coming years.

5.1.3 Prof Tim Jones reported his support for the wiki matchmaking process, although he was aware that take-up was not consistent across the board.

5.1.4 It was noted that some supervisors who had signed up at the beginning of the year had then pulled out – predominantly PhD students. It was suggested that guidance should be circulated to them all, to remind them that they should try not to over-commit in the first place, but that if they did they should aim to commit fully.

5.1.5 Prof Harle reported that no massive changes were being planned for the coming academic year, apart from some minor syllabus updates, in view of the impending Tripos review.

5.1.6 Members were reminded that Units of Assessment had been renamed Modules with immediate effect. It was confirmed that the number of them had reduced to 15 which would result in larger numbers of students on each, especially as the cohort would be larger than the previous year.

5.1.7 Caroline Stewart reported that she would check whether or not Faculty Board had approved the change of term from 'overseer' to 'checker', which had already been approved by TMC. This would be confirmed by correspondence.

#### **6 Examinations**

6.1 It was reported that provisional marks for 1B and Part II had been published and that 1A would be published on CAMSiS after the 1A Examiner Meeting taking place later in the week.

6.2 It was noted that all marks were provisional at this stage as nearly all students had been impacted by the marking and assessment boycott.

6.3 The dates for the final examiner meetings, for the discussion of classing, prizes, etc, were yet to be confirmed.

6.4 Prof Harle reported that the IB and Part II student reps had already indicated that a number of students were contemplating appeals on their exam results (although this could not happen until the final marks were confirmed) and wanted to raise DoSs' awareness of this.

6.5 He also raised the issue of the DNN assessment which had caused difficulties, due to an extension which had been granted in response to an error in the original assignment, which for some had impacted upon their revision time. The issue was being highlighted at this point in case it became a source for the challenging of marks in due course.

- 6.6 It was confirmed that Part II students had been permitted to progress to Part III based on their provisional results. Any students who had appealed could only be considered by the department based on academic performance, whereas any medical appeals would have to be considered by EAMC, who would only make considerations on finalised marks and not provisional, which would inevitably lead to delays.
- 6.7 It was reported that there was potential confusion when deadlines which had been set in advance and published on the HoD notices were subsequently changed. It was confirmed that the alteration of the date for one Unit of Assessment had arisen due to a misunderstanding by the TAs involved but that there had not been widespread alterations.
- 6.8 It was suggested that TMC should be required to confirm all the submission dates and times prior to publication on the HoD notices, and that the dates should not be permitted to change subsequently.
- 6.9 It was felt that there had been a significant improvement in the fairness of marking of the Part II dissertations, although there was some concern the marking process may not be universally known.
- 6.10 It was confirmed that it was the responsibility of the supervisor to identify a UTO before agreeing to supervise a project, but that the department could assist in identifying the right person if it was proving difficult as they would have the ultimate responsibility for this (rather than the University in general or the colleges).
- 6.11 It was confirmed that UTOs who were retiring could still be known as UTOs in terms of supervising but it was suggested that they should only be permitted to supervise if they had been examiners in the past.
- 6.12 It was confirmed that a new webpage for policy documents was being created so that they would be easy to locate.
- 6.13 It was also confirmed that the marking and assessment guidelines would be published on this new webpage once they had been updated.
- 6.14 It was reported that the procedures of the examiner meetings had been vastly improved this year as it had been easier to hold discussions between the supervisor and UTO, which had resulted in far fewer discrepancies.
- 6.15 It was confirmed that dissertation feedback had not yet been sent to students, until the final marks were confirmed.
- 6.16 It was suggested that the previous year's mark boundaries could be advertised to reduce discrepancies in marks awarded as all markers would be able to refer to the same calibration.

## **7 Any other business**

- 7.1 Prof Harle confirmed that he would double-check the dates of the August Re-consideration Pool and circulate them by email.
- 7.2 It was suggested that numbers management could be discontinued, as it seemed that all students could now be accepted due to increasing numbers.
  - 7.2.1 It was confirmed that there should be a formal request from the DoS Forum to the department for the removal of numbers management. The Chair confirmed that he would seek approval for this process from members of the Forum by email, as there were not enough present at the meeting to take a vote.
- 7.3 The chair expressed thanks to Helen Averill, Undergraduate Teaching Administrative Manager, and to Marion Cobby, Undergraduate Teaching Administrator, who were both leaving the department within the following month.

## **8 Date of next meeting: October 2023**