UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Department of Computer Science and Technology

The Directors of Studies in Computer Science Forum

Wednesday 23 January 2025 at 14:00 via Zoom
https://cam-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/84161280030?pwd=RIl2dNIq0hjZOaIbJHOnflkNA897XF.1

UNCONFIRMED Minutes

Members

Prof Richard Mortier (CHR) (RM) ✓
Dr John Fawcett (CH, HOM, HH, LC, M, NEWN, CATH) (JF) ✓
Prof Lawrence Paulson (CLARE) (LP) ✓
Dr David Greaves (CC) (DG) X
Francisco Vargas (CC) (FV) X
Prof Alan Blackwell (DAR) (AB) X
Prof Robert Harle (DOW) (RKH) *(Chair)* ✓
Dr Dima Szamozvancev *(DOW)* (DS) ✓
Prof Thomas Sauerwald (EMM) (TS) ✓
Prof Srinivasan Keshav (FITZ) (SK) ✓
Prof Andreas Vlachos (FITZ) (AV) X
Dr Stephen Cummins (GIRTON) (SC) X
Dr Russell Moore (CAIUS) (RMO) ✓
Prof Timothy Jones (CAIUS) (TJ) ✓
Prof Cecilia Mascolo (JE) (CM) X
Dr Christopher Town (JE, WOLF) (CT)✓
Prof Timothy Griffin (K) (TG) X
Dr Apinan Hasthanasombat (K) (AH) ✓
Dr Alice Hutchings (K) (AHU) X
Prof Jamie Vicary (K) (JV) X
Dr Luana Bulat (MUR, ST EDS) (LB) ✓
Prof Anil Madhavapeddy (PEM) (AM) ✓
Dr Carl Henik Ek (PEM) (CHE) X
Dr Nic Lane (PET, JN) (NL) X
Dr Ramsey Faragher (Q) (RF) X
Dr Jasmin Jahic (Q) (JJ) X
Dr Richard Sharp (ROB) (RS) X
Dr Jeremy Yallop (ROB) (JY) X
Dr Richard Watts (SEL) (RW) ✓
Mr Matthew Ireland (SID) (MI) ✓
Professor Frank Stajano (T) (FS) X
Dr Neel Krishnaswami (T) (NK) X
Dr Hatice Gunes (TH) (HG) X
Dr Jack Hughes (TH) (JH) ✓
Mr Dean Dodds (Admin) (DD) ✓
Mrs Caroline Stewart (Department Secretary) (CS) ✓
Ms Becky Straw (Teaching Admin Manager) (BS) ✓
Dr Sean Holden (T) (SH) ✓
Aidan Bishop (Admin) (ABI) ✓
Dr Robert Mullins (PET, JN) (RMU) ✓
Dr Jon Sterling (CLARE) (JS) ✓

1 Apologies for Absence

Nic Lane
Cecilia Mascolo
Alice Hutchings
Frank Stajano
Stephen Cummins

David Greaves

Notification of AOB

None.

2 Minutes of the meeting of 17 October 2024

Approved.

3 Matters arising from the meeting of 17 October 2024

3.1 AB spoke about being part III examiner and modules which are shared. According to the normalisation procedures a part II student must get a lower mark than a part III student, however this year one exceptional student exceeded part III students. RKH wished this to be raised at TMC. **(Action: RKH & BS)**.
Will be raised at TMC on Monday, has not happened yet.

3.2 TS found it difficult to find dates and information on the website [related to part II projects]. RKH thanked TS for the feedback and agreed deadlines were not clear, would look into this and the role of checkers. **(Action: RKH & BS)**.
RKH believed the dates had been clarified and work was being done to improve part II projects for next year. BS clarified that the proposal had been created but had to go to TMC, changes will be made after.

3.3 The winterpool is 13 to 16th Jan. JF will discuss the pool process offline with new DoSes **(Action: JF)**.
JF stated this had happened.

4 Tripos matters

RKH explained that MLRD has no assessed ticks this year. Students can still do the work but is no longer assessed due to staffing this year, this made it possible to continue the course while people were away.

Work is still ongoing with the tripos review. The department is considering having a Python bootcamp at the start of the year for 2025/26, giving students hands-on experience as well as social. This is still being decided upon and will come up at the following TMC.

AM wonders if we should gather feedback from the DoSes as the IAs have changed quite a bit, covering what DoSes have learned over the past ten years and what we want to do next. RKH explained that the Tripos review has not looked at supervision which is in the DoSes tennis court. RKH asked AM to setup small focus groups for DoSes to discuss Tripos change and supervisions **(Action: AM)**. AM requested an in person DoS meeting. RKH asked for a show of hands, most but not all supported, RKH wished for this to happen later this term, focusing on the Tripos review. AM will collate feedback.

RKH & BS will look at dates for an in person session in the middle of term **(Action: RKH & BS)**. RM suggested short written submissions from people who could not attend, RKH believed this was a good idea.

5 Admissions

5.1 Winter pool outcomes

161 offers, more than the same point in previous years, runs the risk of being oversubscribed in October. Includes deferred offers made in previous years but not deferred offers made this year.

Some mitigation factors so we shouldn't be completely overrun. A higher number of overseas offers, who have a much higher cover ratio, so many will be turned down.

Fewer students intermitting from current IA, who would add to next year's IA.

Last cycle we were able to make many offers during the reconsideration pool, so there is some headroom there. JF expected to be able to make some offers to deserving candidates in the august reconsideration pool.

Computer Science made good use of the pool, many colleges pooling with tags, which does reflect a healthy use of the pool. Computer Science struggled with mature candidates this year, quite a small pool. Few female identified students, no growth from previous years. Students could choose a wider number of genders this year, so more complex than the number of female candidates going down. 75% of candidates identified as male, a balanced 50:50 split is still a long way off.

Very slight noise level increase in candidates from eastern Europe but the effect of Brexit is still very clear in the numbers.

RKH asked about the scale of the overseas skew. RF explained that of 162 offers, 40 or 45 were overseas, up from 35. Not concentrated at any one college.

TJ asked if this was beyond the quota, slightly as the quote was 150, JF explained the function of the quota, allowing colleges to fluctuate. RKH believed we could handle this but would be very surprised if we didn't lose 12 candidates. TJ wondered if we would be able to use the reconsideration pool, JF believed we could.

RMU spoke about some subjects had pre-pool meetings to discuss the pool candidates, asked if we would consider this to improve the selection. JF explained this was possible and had been discussed, not appropriate to discuss candidates via email sharing their details. JF felt it was better without as DoSes would talk up their candidates while candidates who were not represented were not given fair consideration. RKH believed the number of people in the pool to be considered was overwhelming and may be worth reconsidering how we do this. JF had discussed this with admissions tutors and political considerations. Reducing the size of the pool

would push a lot of work onto admissions tutors. TJ found it hard deciding to release candidates with strings or not and felt communicating together more would be helpful. RKH agreed, we could have a pretag release discussion. JF agreed, noted that mathematics has a slightly different process and we could also use this. RM felt Math's process was complex, suggested a spreadsheet which could be automated.

Discussed ways to anonymise candidates when discussing them.

RM requested statistics on the cover ratio of the reconsideration pool.

RKH asked for feedback on the TMUA. JF had spoken to admissions tutors who had widely used it. Due to changes it was hard to compare to previous data.

JF asked if anyone had found generative AI used during applications, RKH had. Colleges are concerned about this and considering returning to in-person tests. LP explained the method used in his college, candidates are given a paper, asked to read it and then answer questions on it. RKH suggested notebook AI.

5.2 Admissions statistics (Keshav)

Keshav and Andreas shared a spreadsheet that would allow other DoSs to share admission statistics such as number of applicants and number of acceptances as well as the degree to which TMUA predicted interview scores.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qHUUoYsr2l2nC_jevf1eCXqagDQr21Sg-QQP2hRytH8/edit?usp=sharing

6 Any other business

7 Date of next meeting: 30 April 2025 at 2pm

There will also be a sub meeting in the next few weeks focused on tripos feedback.