

**University of Cambridge Computer Laboratory  
Teaching Committee**

Chairman: Dr Neil Dodgson

Secretary: Mrs Fiona Billingsley

Minutes of the meeting of the Teaching Committee held on Wednesday 16 January 2008 in GC22 in the William Gates Building

Present:   Dr Neil Dodgson                   Dr Alastair Beresford           Dr Ann Copestake  
          Dr Sean Holden                   Prof Alan Mycroft               Prof Andy Pitts  
          Miss Christine Northeast Mrs Fiona Billingsley       Mrs Margaret Levitt

**1. Apologies for Absence**

An apology was received from Dr Ian Wassell.

**2. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes were approved and signed.

**3. Timetabling of Tripos Lecture Courses 2008-09**

Due to five lecturers taking Sabbatical Leave in 2008-09, it was noted that the teaching of a number of Part II lecture courses will be affected (see documents TC0708/06 and TC0708/07.)

Agreed solutions:

- Ask AD to teach Quantum Computing in Michaelmas Term instead of in Lent Term
- Move Digital Signal Processing to Lent Term
- Suspend Artificial Intelligence II and Advanced Graphics for one year
- Ask EJB to teach Natural Language Processing
- Ask SWM, PR and RDM to discuss with DJG creating a new course which teaches integrated systems design. Ask DJG to teach the course. It would replace the current VLSI Design course given by PR
- NAD to liaise with JMB concerning a replacement lecturer for Distributed Systems

A draft timetable for 2008-09 for Part IA and IB was considered by the committee (TC0708/08). With regard to the Part IB timetable, NAD, MGK & RJA are to discuss whether or not to run an Introduction to Security course.

It was agreed that there are no problems with the current draft timetable for Part IA Paper 2. Concerning Paper 1, it was agreed that Discrete Mathematics I will be taught in eight lectures in Michaelmas Term. NAD to discuss with GW, PR, TJG and MPF who should teach Discrete Mathematics I & II, given that PR will be on sabbatical leave.

The committee discussed the proposal for four stand-alone, non-examined, Applications lectures. Possible topics include: practical applications of MATLAB; design testing; evaluation of packages; genome searching (string matching algorithms); simple fluid modelling (iterative simulation); radiosity (equation solving). It was noted that a meeting of interested parties on 15 January led to the suggestion that programming be taught in Lent Term by: a short course introducing Java and object-oriented programming at the start of Term; a practical, laboratory-based course, teaching Java programming; and a short course on C programming at the end of Term. The committee discussed AB's proposal of teaching software design using Java as an example object-oriented programming language in Michaelmas Term. This would be in conjunction with weekly 2hr practical sessions. It was agreed that AB will liaise with AFB and FS about a possible way forward with the

teaching and timetabling of Software Engineering and Problem Solving, Data Structures & Algorithms. It was agreed that AB will take charge of reworking the timetable and structure for Paper 1 and will circulate a report to committee members.

#### **4. MPhil progress report**

The Committee approved NAD's report to go to the Faculty Board (TC0708/09). It was noted that all paperwork necessary for the approval of the new MPhil is required by MAL for 4 March.

#### **5. Student Feedback on Michalmas Term lecture courses**

NAD circulated a summary of the feedback which had been received from students via the new online feedback system (TC0708/10). Despite a lack of responses received, it was noted that:

- The teaching of Digital Electronics was considered adequate but could do with a more engaging lectures
- Discrete Mathematics needs more time to cover the material
- Algorithms II was poorly delivered, poorly organised and there was too much material
- Digital Communications II lectures tried to cover too much material

NAD was actioned to talk to FS, IW, JAC and DRM about the feedback. He is also to email the students to report on the committee's response to their feedback. It was noted that Andy Rice's Prolog course and Peter Sewell's Semantics of Programming Languages received excellent feedback.