

**UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
FACULTY OF COMPUTER SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

Chairman: Prof A Mycroft

Secretary: Ms D E Pounds

Minutes of the meeting of the Tripos Management Committee
held on Monday 16 January 2012 at 14:15 in GC22

Present

Dr R Harle-*(Parts IA and IB Course Director)*

Dr R Gibbens-*(Representative on Mathematics Faculty Board)*

Dr Sean Holden-*(Part II Course Director and Supervisions Coordinator)*

Dr A Moore-*(Chairman of SSCoF)*

Prof Alan Mycroft-*(Tripos Co-ordinator, Representative for NatSci Management Cttee)*

Ms D Pounds-*(Secretary)*

Prof Peter Robinson-*(Exchange Programme Organiser)*

Dr I Wassell-*(Representative for MPhil in ACS)*

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Sabbatical and other leave

- I. The committee thanked Prof A Dawar who steps down as Deputy Head of Department (teaching) from December 2011, for his hard work and contributions and welcomed Prof Ann Copestake who takes up the role from January 2012.
- II. Prof Mike Gordon and Dr Steven Hand have requested Sabbatical leave. The committee approved the requests and noted that substitute teaching has been proposed.

3. Notification of any other business

- I. Staff and student consultative forum (SSCoF) minutes
- II. Report from Dr R Gibbens
- III. Student surveys

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

5. Matters Arising

Analysis of the correlation between courses offering only examples classes rather than supervisions and low figures for question attempts was discussed but no firm conclusions could be drawn from the figures. The committee requested that in future, examiners provide a median mark for each question which will enable further analysis. **Action DP**

The Committee continues to be concerned that some courses are not able to offer supervisors and noted student dissatisfaction with this.

6. Correspondence

- I. Churchill Admissions. The Committee considered the information contained in Churchill College's webpage to be misleading to applicants. Action to counter

this was discussed but the Committee also noted that any public discussion might damage relationships with the colleges. The Committee agreed the action taken by Prof Mycroft (Item 6ii below) should rectify matters.

- II. Letter from AM to John Fawcett. Prof Mycroft reported that, in response to his letter, the webpage has now been corrected satisfactorily.
- III. Letter from the Development Officer confirming sponsorship of Part II dissertation prize. The Development Officer has confirmed that Gloucester Research have paid £2,500 which provides a prize of £500 for the next 5 years. Prof P Robinson suggested the company should provide funds to the Laboratory in addition to this sum but arrangements have already been finalised and the prize money paid. Afternote: The Development officer has subsequently confirmed that Gloucester Research are members of the Laboratory Supporters Club and contribute generously.

7. Part II supervisions

- I. Formal equality between colleges. The Committee noted that inequality between the amount of supervision provided resulted in considerable resentment expressed in student course surveys but considered the best solution is for the department to provide more supervision.
- II. HEFCE requirement on equality of teaching between colleges. The Committee expressed concern that evident inequality will become an issue during the forthcoming University-wide Teaching Assessment.
- III. Student feedback. The key student concerns last term were:
 - Lack of microphones in the Hopkinson Theatre. **Action DP**
 - Poor lecture notes and insufficient examples sheets.
 - Supervisions-particularly delays in departmental provision and inequality of provision between colleges. The Committee agreed to reassess the supervision arrangements after the Lent term as Student Admin have work in progress to improve the situation. **Action SBH/DP**
- IV. Example sheets. The Committee considered the proposal to request all lecturers to provide examples sheets for use by supervisors made at the Director of Studies meeting (10/01/2012). It was agreed that, while this was desirable, this committee could request but not enforce the practice. Members felt it would be useful to look at exemplar material and recommended lecturers should look at examples sheets provided by Prof Neil Dodgson on the Department website. **Action AWM**
Dr Harle agreed to research the current provision of examples sheets across the Department and produce statistical information. **Action RKH**

8. Teaching Administration

Arrangements for students with disabilities (confidential item). Individual student arrangements were discussed. The Director of Studies concerned has requested the Committee appoint one member to liaise with him to facilitate communication. AM agreed to undertake this role.

Action AM

9. Any other business.

- I. SCoF minutes. Dr R Gibbens responded to a Part IB request for his and John Daugman's course, Mathematical Methods, to be split into two courses, one in Michaelmas and one in Lent. The course contains two parts and Dr Gibbens agreed the proposal would give students more time to learn each part and expressed himself happy to make the change.
- II. Dr Gibbens deferred his report from Maths faculty regarding the possible replacement of Geology with Biology of cells as a Part IA option but informed the Committee that, because of timetabling constraints, the change would result in CST part IA taking two much harder Maths modules.

Action RG

- III. Student surveys. The surveys have highlighted the problem of a wide variation in prior knowledge in Part IA. The Committee discussed whether a prerequisite of Computer science A level would address the problem but expressed concern at the standard of computer science teaching in schools. It was observed that some differences in prior knowledge could be addressed by the pre-course reading list on our web-site.

10. Date of next meeting

27 Feb 2012