

**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 27 February 2012 at 14:15 in GC22

Present

Dr R Gibbens-(*Representative on
Mathematics Faculty Board*)
Dr R Harle-(*Parts IA and IB Course
Director*)
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**
Dr A Moore, Dr S Holden.
- 2. Sabbatical and other leave**
None requested.
- 3. Notification of any other business**
Request from PPS Tripos to move time of lectures for PPS paper 3. (Item 14)

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 4. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.**
- 5. Matters Arising**
 - I. Ms D Pounds confirmed that the examiners have agreed to provide this committee with a median mark for each question.
 - II. Dr R Harle reported the findings of his research into example sheets. There has been some improvement, particularly for Part IA but Part II examples are still lacking.
 - III. Ms D Pounds confirmed a much improved allocation of Part II supervisors this term. Supervisions have been offered to all students who requested them within a few days of the sign-up date for all courses except Artificial Intelligence II.
- 6. Reports from other committees.**

The committee received the notes of the Staff and Student Consultative Forum meeting held on 8 February 2012 and discussed the following:

 - I. Concerns with one Part II course at present being covered during the lecturer's sabbatical leave was noted and the Chair of Examiners has been alerted to the problem. The Committee also expressed some concern that there is no Departmental guidance in place for covering sabbaticals.

- II. In response to student feedback, Dr Richard Gibbens agreed his course, Mathematical Methods, should be divided in two next year with Prof John Daugman delivering his part in Michaelmas term and Dr Gibben's part in Lent term.
- III. The custodian at the Hopkinson Theatre has not been able to provide microphones as this requires installing speakers. Dr R Gibbens also noted that the computer projector is very slow to warm up. The Committee would like to request that the Faculty Board take up the matter with the University on their behalf.

Afternote: Mrs M Levitt has approached the Custodian and received the following response:

- a. **The projector has been checked and now works to the manufacturer's specification, warming up in 30 seconds.**
 - b. **All wireless frequencies on the site are in use so only a static microphone could be installed. There have not been a large number of complaints so the Department would need to make special representation. However, he suggests the problem may be caused by lecturers facing the black/white boards when speaking which will affect the acoustics.**
- IV. Part II students expressed concern at the low numbers of students achieving a I or 2:1 class as a result of their performance in Part IA NST courses and the practice of subsequent cohort tracking. The Committee expressed the belief that the practice was fair and in line with the rest of the University and with NST students. The current Part IB students achieved a Baxter score of 3.1 and the Committee anticipate that their final results will improve.
Afternote: Research into recent statistics by Prof P Robinson suggests that, whilst we award 23% firsts which matches the University average, we award only 32% of our students a II.I class, significantly less than the University average of 52%. The Chair of Examiners, Prof M Gordon has been consulted and is happy to discuss this with the Committee. The matter will be further discussed at the next TMC meeting on 23 April 2012.
- V. The Committee discussed the practicalities of putting examination solutions onto the web as agreed with the faculty Board and agreed to consult the Pagemaster. **Afternote: Prof P Robinson recommends that Filer\www\html\teaching\exams\answers be made visible to lecturers to edit a sample question for use as revision material. Action DP/MGK/AM.**

Joint teaching and Consultative Committee.

Nothing to report.

7. Correspondence

- I. A request to reduce the number of lectures for Algorithms I from 15 to 13 for the current year. (Item 7.i). The Committee did not support the request and felt strongly that Departmental policy not to change course structures during the academic year should stand. It recommended a substitute lecturer be found or the lectures times rearranged. **Action AM.**
- II. Revision of Marking and Classing Document (item 7.ii). The Committee agreed the change of wording.

8. Plagiarism statement (<http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~am21/cl-preview/exams/newplag.html> Dr I Wassell).

The Committee approved the revised statement which is now specific to both the Tripos, Part III and the MPhil in ACS. **Afternote: the statement is now installed at <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/teaching/exams/plagiarism.html>**

9. Prolog via practicals (paper: Prolog Proposal-Dr A Beresford).

The Committee warmly welcomed the proposal and deemed it well-thought out. The redesign of the course was approved and it was noted that it would be piloted as an experiment for one year. The Committee voiced the concern that there may be a problem fitting the course into the proposed timeframe, particularly with the anticipated increase in the number of Part IB students in 2013-14. Some concerns were also expressed that the Department now relied on Dr A Rice and Dr A Beresford to deliver most practical courses and should therefore consider a contingency plan to cover unforeseen absences.

10. The Committee supported Prof A Mycroft's proposal for the online syllabus to include guidelines on the appropriate number of supervision hours offered for all Part IA/IB/II courses. It was noted that this was particularly useful for Part IB and Part II but less so for Part IA.

11. Tripos tick hand-ins: late submission guidelines. The committee recommended that guidelines should be added to the Head of Department notices and publicised to lecturers, students and Directors of Studies. The matter is to be further discussed at the next ATCMC meeting of 1 March 2012 to agree a unified approach across all taught courses. **Action AM/DP**

12. Part III progression standard. Analysis of the performance of Part III students compared to ACS students so far this academic year has shown them to be achieving very highly and in the top quartile. The Committee felt the high entry requirements were too harsh, discouraged CST students from applying for Part III and created a feeling of unfairness. The Committee requested the Faculty Board re-consider the guidelines for next year as a trial to allow more Tripos students to progress to Part III. Directors of Studies should be informed of any changes. **Action AM**

13. Teaching Administration

- I. Web 'Rapid Feedback' response procedure has now been renamed 'Hotline'. The Committee agreed Student Administrators should deal with communications initially and pass comments or requests to the appropriate member of staff to avoid duplication of effort. The Committee felt that the considered response to communications of a serious nature should come from the Deputy Head of Department (Teaching).
- II. The Pagemaster is creating an online system for Tickers to record ticks. The Committee welcomed this facility and requested the summary of Ticks should be in HTML format, using the present Part IA format as a model. **Action DP/MGK**

14. Any Other Business

PPS Tripos have requested a timetable change for Part IA students for next year. The Committee considered this but found it to be incompatible with the Computer Science timetable. **Action DP. Afternote: the PPS Tripos Committee have been informed and are reconsidering their timetable.**

15. Date of next meeting

23 April 2012