



Faculty of Computer Science & Technology
Tripos Management Committee

Chairman: Dr David Greaves

Secretary: Ms Dinah Pounds

Minutes of the meeting of the Tripos Management Committee
held on Monday 23 January 2017 at 13:30 in GC22

Members present

Dr David Greaves (*Chairman*)
Dr Robert Harle (*Part IA coordinator*)
Dr Sean Holden (*Part II and supervisions
coordinator*)
Dr Mateja Jamnik
Prof Ian Leslie

Prof Andrew Pitts
Dinah Pounds (*Secretary*)
Prof Peter Robinson (*Exchange
Programme Organiser and Deputy HoD*)
Megan Sammons (*Student Administrator*)

1. Apologies for Absence

Dr Rob Harle
Prof Peter Robinson

The Committee welcomed Prof Pitts to the Committee as advisor on mathematics.

2. Notification of any other business

- I. IA class size in 2017. (Item 8)
- II. Review of the new Paper 3 courses held in Michaelmas.(Item 11)

3. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- I. It has been agreed by Faculty Board that all PhD students will be asked to nominate 5 subjects they would be willing to supervise. The benefits of the scheme are to be publicised as part of the Lab's 'Good Citizen' initiative.

Action DP

- II. Item 5. The lecture theatre in the Roger Needham building, next door to the William Gates building, is available for use for our lectures. The seating is not raked but there is a good dais for the lecturer.

5. Correspondence.

Letter from Chair of the Faculty Board of Mathematics regarding the requirement for Further Maths A level to study the Mathematics Tripos. This Committee agreed to follow the Maths Faculty's advice and recommend that students wishing to study Computer Science with Maths should study A level Further Maths but that the requirements to study any other Computer Science option should remain unchanged at present. **Action DP**

6. Reports from other committees

- i. Directors of Studies Forum. This Committee considered the discussions at the DoS meeting about unfairness between Part II students on the different streams but decided that the amount of work for module assessments earlier in the year counterbalanced only sitting 2 papers in June as opposed to 3. The Committee felt that the issue of unfairness has been resolved and a compensating written examination for the final two units of assessment taken by Part II students on the 75% option is not required.
- ii. SCoF. Directors of Studies have been notified that some female students do not wish to always have their supervisions with other females and would prefer to be paired with students of a similar ability.
- iii. The JTSC Committee. Prof Peter Robinson's workshop on Part II dissertation marking was very much appreciated by supervisors and will become an annual event.

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS

7. Requests for sabbatical leave.

Pietro Lio. This has been agreed by circulation. We have received two offers to lecture Part II Bioinformatics from the Vet School. Further CVs and a reference will be requested. **Action DP**

The Committee also discussed the possibility of expanding this area of the curriculum and will explore contacts in Maths and at the Sanger Institute. **Action IML.**

8. Admissions.

- I. The Committee anticipate there may be a significant increase in the number of admitted students in Part IA next year. Whilst it is very difficult to predict how many students will matriculate, a reasonable estimate is 135 which is an increase of 35 students on the 2016 intake. We do have room capacity for lectures and classes of this size but finding sufficient college supervisors and tickers may prove difficult but it should be possible to recruit demonstrators for Paper 3 from Part IB as the courses will be in their second year.
- II. The Committee has concerns that continuing to offer computer science as an NST option may not be possible in the longer term due to the increased number of applicants to pure computer science. As an alternative to withdrawing a 'borrowing' option altogether, some departments offer a quota of places and colleges decide how these should be distributed between them. Currently there are 60 NST students taking CS Paper 1 but only 10 CS students are taking a bench NST subject and we anticipate fewer CS students will take an NST option as the new CS Paper 3 option becomes more established. All CS students apart from those taking the CS+Maths option take NST Maths for Natural Science. Prof Pitts will investigate whether taking one of either of the Maths Department's Papers 1 and 2 would be an option instead, should we discontinue our borrowing links with NST. This proposal will be taken to Faculty Board for further discussion. The timescale for implementing such a change is 3 years. In the meantime, the pre-arrival course has been very successful at helping NST students to assess their suitability for a computer science course and allowing them to change to another option in good time if the course proved unsuitable. The pre-arrival course will be a pre-requisite from 2017 and we should ensure it is sufficiently rigorous to give students an accurate picture of the demands of the Tripos course. **Action AMP/DP/RKH**

- 9. Report on course feedback survey.** Student Admin reported a low response rate from the MOODLE surveys and will now use Quatrix instead. The questions will be reviewed and checked for relevance to new courses. **Action DP**
The Committee noted students reported that ECAD practicals had too few demonstrators. Students' request that C and C++ should be an online course was agreed by the Committee and the lecturer will be asked to introduce this from MT 2017.
Action DP/DJG
- 10. MIT exchange.** The scheme with MIT is to be withdrawn from 2017-18 and Regulation 18 will be revised. The Committee has no plans to introduce an alternative exchange scheme with a different institution but would like to retain the option to introduce such a scheme in the future. The Head of Teaching will be consulted on the appropriate action. **Action DP. Afternote: We have requested to keep the regulations with an empty schedule just in case a suitable exchange partner appears.**
- 11. Report on the progress of the new Paper 3.** Feedback suggests that the courses have been very well received. Databases ran 4 practicals as drop-in sessions and they were well attended. The lecturer reported that the course was a huge improvement over the old 1B version. The students seemed to enjoy the practical orientation and the practical work. We may have made the practical work a bit too easy, as we were unsure of how it the students would handle it. For next year we will try to find a document-oriented database that does not require coding in Java. In addition, the course was of course, lacking in past exams, but there should have been more exercises indicating what exam questions might look like. This will be improved next year. A report on Graphics is awaited.
- 12. Revision of Part II and III. Chairman to report.**
- i. JTSC discussion. Concerns were expressed that offering many MPhil courses to undergraduates will be problematic due to the high number students. MPhil students' experience may be diminished as result. This Committee felt that some existing MPhil modules can successfully be used but will need separate assessment for Part II. Some new Part II modules will also need to be planned. The Committee agreed a written Paper 10 was not desirable.
 - ii. Paper 7 (To be introduced in MT 2017). Dr Greaves confirmed that Paper 7 should be a logical follow through from the new Paper 3 which mostly contains material from AI, HCI and NLP. It therefore follows that it is this group who will have to do the most reorganising for Paper 7 and Part II. The following suggested framework for Paper 7 was agreed:
Further Algorithms – 2 questions
Further Graphics – 2 questions
Further HCI (possibly to include some security)
NLP (in Lent term) – 2 questions,(subject to confirmation from theme meeting)
Ethics (possibly with security) – 1 question
Total – 9 questions
A machine learning course containing the theory for Paper 3 MLRD is also desirable for this paper. Information Retrieval will be withdrawn next year due to sabbatical leave. This framework will be further discussed at the NLP/AI group meeting.
 - iii. Report on Theory group meeting met on 12/01/2017 and discussed ideas for Part II courses. The group has appointed Prof Fiore and Dr N Krishnaswami

to develop new options for new Part II modules. Two further meetings will take place shortly with the systems and NLP/AI groups.

13. Date of next meeting – 27 February 2017