UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Computer Laboratory

Faculty of Computer Science & Technology
Tripos Management Committee

Chairman: Dr Timothy Jones   **Secretary: Ms Dinah Pounds**

Minutes of the Tripos Management Committee
will be held on Monday 14 October 2019 at 14:00 in GC22

Members

Prof Alastair Beresford (*Deputy HoD*)   Dinah Pounds *(Secretary)*
Dr Timothy Jones *(Chairman)*   Tara Leggett *(Student Administrator)*
Dr Hatice Gunes   Prof Frank Stajano
Dr Robert Harle   Dr Damon Wischik
Dr Sean Holden

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   Dr Hatice Gunes
   Prof Alastair Beresford was not required for this meeting.

2. **Notification of any other business**

   i.   Simone Teufel submission of sabbatical request (to be discussed under item 6)
   ii. Guidelines on coursework extensions.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**
   The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
   2ii DJW suggested the advice to Examiners about the mean and standard deviation should contain the word 'robust' for each of them. This will be conveyed to the present Chair of Tripos Examiners. **Action DP**

4. **Update on pending actions**

   i.   Part II unit convenors have been issued with marking guidelines. Ticks are not to be used as in Part IA and IB a failed tick implies a mark penalty which is not appropriate for Part II. The term 'exercise' should be used instead. Convenors found the guidance useful and the Committee recommends a meeting with convenors be repeated at the start of each year. **Action DP**

   ii. The Committee approved marking guidelines for Part II Dissertations and these will be circulated to students, supervisors and examiners.

   iii. Guidelines for tickers. The Committee recommended removal of the word 'virtually' as each student is expected to pass each tick. The change regarding OOP ticks beginning academic year 2020/21 was discussed; ticks will be replaced by a grading system.

5. Other matters arising.
No other matters arising.

6. Applications for sabbatical leave

  i. Anuj Dawar – Anuj is in the process of finding people to cover his courses in order to take sabbatical leave. There has been difficulty with his Easter course, Complexity Theory. **Afternote:** Prof Fiore has agreed to cover the course. If possible, it will be moved to the second half of Lent term. Quantum Computing has been assigned cover already.

  ii. Anil Madhavapeddy – In order to grant sabbatical leave, RH agreed to cover for Foundations of Computer Science. Cover is still needed for Cloud Computing in Lent term.

  iii. Simone Teufel – Simone's request for sabbatical leave will span over one term. **Afternote:** Part II NLP is to remain in Michaelmas term and therefore cover will be required.

7. Correspondence.

  i. The email from Alan Mycroft asks for TMC's position on course material on the website. (see item 8)
      A concern was made by members regarding the increasing use of VPNs (ref d point 4) instead of Raven. It was noted that Directors of Studies are not able to look at pre-arrival matters due to this. A decision was reached to ask whether or there can be a separation. The suggestion was that matters relating only to the lab are fine to be behind a VPN, but information for the wider remit should be behind Raven. A query was raised to come back and explain why the technical reason for some things to be behind VPN and others not. Conclusively, the overreliance of VPNs and not Raven is not desirable when both are at the Lab's disposal.
      The University requires that course materials should be made public. Members agreed that public should be the default with the option to be changed by lecturers if they wish to.
      Action TMJ

  ii. The Secretary informed members that lecture capture is to be made available for all lecturers to opt in to, should they wish to, from January. A request was made asking to chase this information up to find out where in the university it will be available.
      Action DP

8. Committee policy on website integration. These options were proposed:
  i. Arrange for a portion of the Filer file space to export to the web (as we currently have)
  ii. Ask staff members to use Drupal to edit/upload (the way the cst.cam.ac.uk web pages are setup)
  iii. Ask staff members to use Moodle for all courses (we would need to check we archive and index these pages correctly)

Members were in favour of the current situation. Syllabus pages and course content should stay on the website; administrators only to edit the syllabus pages and the remaining course pages available for lecturers to edit.

All other teaching pages should be on the new website and editable by Drupal. The webpage cl.cam should redirect to cst.cam automatically. Members requested that the front webpage of the old website be removed as it is confusing to students.

 It was noted that students uploading work onto Moodle has been working very well and the Committee supported continuing this.

A suggestion for lecturers to develop their own websites was not considered practical.

Members agreed that all content for courses should be on materials tabs and putting materials on to Moodle should be discouraged

Members also requested that the web pages be linked to https:www.timetable.cam.ac.uk
Action DP

9. **2019 exam reports and matters arising.**
   i.   The External Examiner report raised a concern that the timeframe for marking and quantity of dissertations overstretched examiners. This may disadvantage less able and overseas students whose dissertations often require more time to mark. In response, the Department has made provision for two additional examiners just for dissertation marking. In addition, the submission deadline now allows an extra week for marking.
   ii. Internal examiner report. Members raised concern over students getting inconsistent marks. The process of normalisation of Part II Unit marks addresses this. Members agreed that it is appropriate to normalise between units, but not between exam papers.
        Members noted some evidence that female students are under-achieving in IA and IB when compared to their male counterparts but catch up in Part II. The general consensus throughout the Committee was that the Computer Lab is not alone, as this seems to be a pattern in other departments also. Further monitoring was requested.
   iii. Part II dissertation vivas. The Committee discussed whether to require them or not. The Chairman noted that it was something that was specifically asked for in the examiner's report and NSS student report a few years ago. The reason behind the vivas was revisited, noting that they were conducted for plagiarism purposes, and to give a perception of fairness as some students wanted to ensure the process was more thoroughly audited. The Committee confirmed that the Examiners are permitted to move marks up or down.
   iv. Comments for Faculty Board on UG exam results analytics 2019-10-14. The TMC agreed that this matter seems useful for data and presented graphs. It will allow all to see what is happening on courses and on different papers, and colleges.

10. **Report from Prof A Dawar on progress of the Tripos maths review.** The Committee agreed that it appears that this is progressing well and will be completed by end of Michaelmas term.

11. **Tripos assessment.** IA and IB courses are all currently assessed by end-of-year examination. Will the Committee consider alternative methods of assessment for one paper, particularly for practical courses, in line with current University proposals? **TMJ**

There has been a push throughout the University to consider different forms of assessment. Students often find exams too stressful. Concerns have also been raised that students begin Part II units with no experience of other methods of assessment than examinations. Members supported the proposal from the Chair to revise Regulations to allow the Head of Department's Notice to enable flexible changes to the assessment of a IA and IB Tripos paper. Paper 3 and Paper 7 are the most appropriate as they contain practical courses. Other practical courses suitable for non-examination assessment can be moved into these papers.

Feedback from students noted that writing programming code in exams was disliked because it can be so easy to make a mistake and does not reflect real-life practice. Members also considered the option of putting a project into IA and the possibility of practical work at a computer, but in a controlled environment. This raised practicality problems, such as where to seat 130 students and whether or not to stop them using internet in such assessments.
Action TMJ/DP

12. **Part II Units. Future course planning.** Two Units were oversubscribed this year. Approximately five more units are needed for 2020-21 when the Part II student numbers increase considerably. In particular, there are not enough systems courses in Lent term. Directors of Studies will be canvassed on their views for which courses areas should be expanded.

    Considerations made included the possibility that there may be courses in papers eight and nine suitable to turn into units. However, it was noted that by changing them to units, this would reduce the choice on Papers eight and nine. There is also the option of running a course twice over two terms. Members agreed to look into this as a possibility.

    Members felt that lecturer TA support should be made more uniform across courses. The Units are quite costly to the Department in terms of resources. The Committee proposed that large-group supervisions be arranged rather than tutorials and seminars. Directors of Studies will be consulted.

13. **Accessibility guidelines.** New guidelines are required from September 2020 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps" Public sector websites, including universities, need to meet the new Accessibility Guidelines by September 2020 [1]. This includes teaching materials such as handouts, slides, etc. What does the Committee plan to inform lecturers of what is required and how will we monitor and support them?

    In regards to the access guidelines coming into play that will affect public sector websites, the Chairman assured all that the University is not required to conform as of yet. The matter is awaiting clarification from the central University.

14. **Support for female students in IA**.
    Members were informed that some lecturers are considering an event for IA female students as previously discussed in item 9ii. Many females fall behind in first term – particularly with programming. They are endeavouring to build more support more quickly for female students.

15. **Any other business**
    The Committee discussed deadline extensions on coursework. It was noted that only extensions to Part II dissertations are required to go to the University-wide

Committee for approval. The CST Chair of Examiners will deal with minor extensions in conjunction with college tutors and directors of studies.

Date of next meeting: Monday 25 November 2019