UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Department of Computer Science and Technology

Department of Computer Science and Technology

Tripos Management Committee

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

Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Tripos Management Committee

held on Monday 23 November 2020 at 14:00 via Teams

Present:

Prof Alastair Beresford (Deputy HoD)	Dinah Pounds (Teaching Admin Manager)
Dr Timothy Jones (Chairman)	Caroline Stewart (Departmental Secretary)
Dr Hatice Gunes	Helen Neal (Student Administrator)
Dr Robert Harle	Marion Cobby (Student Administrator)
Dr Sean Holden	
Prof Frank Stajano	
Dr Damon Wischik	

1   Apologies for Absence

Dr Ian Wassell

2   Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

2.1   With the amendment to item 9 to read *"It was confirmed that the project briefing slides specify that it is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to help identify supervisors and that they can also veto them if necessary (as outlined in the Pink Book)."* the minutes were signed as an accurate record.

3   Update on pending actions – matters arising from the minutes of 12 October 2020

3.1   It was reported that nothing had yet been heard from Anuj Dawar re 1A Maths, so if he did not respond to further emails an alternative would be sought.

Action: Tim Jones

3.2 **Brief document being written on how to improve the process of marking and moderating Part II dissertations**

3.2.1 As this continued to be work in progress it would be deferred until the next meeting of the TMC.

Action: Damon Wischik

3.3 **Revision of supervisor report form for Part II projects to increase supervisor input in order to provide examiners with more expert advice (2020-11-23a)**

3.3.1 There was considerable discussion as to the inclusion of 'contribution to field' as it could imply the necessity to perform research to achieve the highest marks, even though that was not the case. The counter-argument was that those that do new work should be rewarded in the marking scheme.

3.3.2 It was suggested that the form could be re-worded to include a caveat to confirm that a student would not need to expressly demonstrate the undertaking of research.

3.3.3 It was agreed that the wording could be re-thought and presented to the next meeting of TMC.

Action: Rob Harle

4 **Reports from other Committees**

4.1 **Directors of Studies meeting, 16.10.20 (2020-11-23b)**

4.1.1 There were no issues to report as this had been more of an information-flow to the people present.

4.2 **SSCoF, 21.10.20 (2020-11-23c)**

4.2.1 The last meeting of SSCoF on 21 October had been with the previous year's reps and had gone well. The responses received subsequently were from a few students with strong views but it was felt that these did not reflect the general tone of the meeting, where the reps had understood the bigger picture of the constraints due to the pandemic.

4.2.2 The main issues raised were regarding communication and lecture videos.

4.2.3 **Communication**

4.2.3.1 It was acknowledged that there could have been a briefing lecture for all returning students at the beginning of Michaelmas term, to better inform them of expectations. It was proposed that briefing lectures for all students would take place at the beginning of Lent term.

Action: Rob Harle

4.2.3.2 The main outcome of these responses was a suggestion to create a document, to circulate to staff and students and to publish on the website, outlining how students' expectations would be managed in terms of information, what they could expect to receive from the teaching and especially the quality of video lectures.

Action Tim Jones

4.2.4 **Lecture videos**

4.2.4.1 A preference for standardisation had been expressed, as a number of different systems were being used.

4.2.4.2 It was agreed that the document referred to above would include information for lecturers regarding consistency and 'best practice'.

4.2.4.3 Some students did not like the re-use of last year's videos, but it was agreed that it should not be an expectation to provide these videos as they were in addition to the main teaching.

4.2.4.4 It was confirmed lecture-capturing would be discussed at the meeting of SSCoF on 25 November 2020.

5 **Sabbatical requests**

5.1 It was confirmed that the sabbatical request from Markus Kuhn had not yet been submitted – he would be reminded to do so by the beginning of Lent term at the latest.

Action: Tim Jones

5.2 Once this had taken place, final decisions could be made on how to cover Security, as various options were being suggested.

6   Correspondence

**6.1   A collation of suggestions on Part II project proposal submission and reporting
(2020-11-23d)**

6.1.1   Items 1-4: suggestions were agreed. In particular, students to be given guidance for phase 1 and a template for phase 2.

Action: Tim Jones

6.1.2   Item 5: agreed to add some words to the overseer guidance to give an indication of when feedback would be expected from them.

Action: Tim Jones

6.1.3   Item 6: Overseer sign-off had seemed very time-consuming this year, partly because the system had been set up late.

6.1.4   Various suggestions for improvement were made, including write-access for all those involved or the provision of a single sheet for DoSs to confirm approval of all students in their college; Google drive was also supported as an option.

6.1.5   It was agreed that the idea of a single spreadsheet, with write-access for all, would be considered for the next academic year.

Action: Dinah Pounds

6.1.6   It was agreed to consider the option of students uploading their phase 1 and phase 2 submissions to Googledrive also.

6.2   FMS-Guidance for exam scripts now that exams are online – should they be typed or hand-written? (220-11-23e)

6.2.1   There was support for typed answers to be encouraged, particularly as students were learning and working on-line anyway, as it would be quicker for them to write and easier for markers to read.

6.2.2   It was agreed that a policy should be implemented that gave the question-setter and marker the option to identify which they would prefer.

6.2.3   It was agreed that this approach could be trialled this year, given the pandemic context, although it was not certain whether this would be possible as the examinations were to be managed by the Registry this year.

6.2.4   It was agreed that the Chair of Examiners would be invited to give his opinion.

6.2.5   It was agreed to discuss this at the proposed meeting on 25 November 2020 on exam question setting, led by the Deputy Head of Department.

6.2.6   The results of the discussions above would circulated to TMC members in order to review the process at the next meeting.

Action: Alastair Beresford

6.3   Future teaching: should we continue to make use all of the videos which have been created? (2020-11-23f)

6.3.1   It was noted that a lot of lecture time had been freed up due the pre-recording of video lectures and that lecture videos could perhaps be left up and available to watch again, in the future.

6.3.2   It was suggested that lecturers should be free to choose whether or not they re-use videos when returning to face-to-face lectures, or indeed to remain teaching via videos only.

6.3.3   It was acknowledged that best practice should be the aim of any decision made and that this could be discussed further at future meetings, after giving it careful consideration.

Action: Tim Jones

7   Part II Supervisions and the shortage of supervisors for several Part II courses

7.1   It was confirmed that DoS had been made aware of the shortage of supervisors for several Part II courses.

7.2   To date, supervisions had not been offered for Information Theory, Principles of Communications and Business Studies.

7.3   The imminent retirement of John Daugman would mean that Information Theory would no longer run.

7.4   Business Studies was not seen as a problem due the seminars with external speakers which take place for this unit.

| 7.5 | Principles of Communication: there was a suggestion that this might be converted to a unit of assessment and perhaps taught in a different way. An alternative would be to survey the members of the lecturer's group to find out why there was no enthusiasm for supervising it. |

Action: Tim Jones to talk to Jon Crowcroft

| 7.6 | Although example classes were seen to be an alternative, it was acknowledged that they were not popular and student much preferred face to face interaction. |
| 7.7 | It was agreed that it would be preferable to be able to offer supervisions for all courses in Part 2. |

8   Course Planning for 2021-22

8.1   Future arrangements for Part II Quantum Computing
| 8.1.1 | It was confirmed that this would continue to be covered by Steven Herbert, as an external lecturer. |
| 8.1.2 | It was noted that Anuj Dawar would need to confirm that he would continue to be a UTO with oversight, to cover exams. |

Action: Dinah Pounds

8.2   Part II Unit planning - the courses offered in 2020 can be viewed here: https://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/teaching/2021/part2-75.html
| 8.2.1 | These were confirmed as all being fine for the next academic year. |

8.3   Replacement courses for Part II Information Theory and Computer Vision
| 8.3.1 | Due to the imminent retirement of John Daugman, it was agreed that Cengiz Oztireli would be contacted about the possibility of taking over Computer Vision and a new lecturer be found for Information Theory. |

Action: Tim Jones

9   IA supervisions. Currently the recommended norm is 1 supervision per 4 lectures. Other students taking NST Maths for NS receive one supervision per 3 lectures. The lecturer also recommends more supervisions for Paper 2 Discrete Maths.

| 9.1 | The Deputy Head of Department confirmed that he had collected some data and looked at CamCORS but had not yet completed the exercise. |
| 9.2 | It was acknowledged that there had been problems historically with the route above, but that it was only a suggested norm as the colleges provide the supervision timings. |

Action: Alastair Beresford

10   Access for students outside the department to Moodle - a large number of requests have been received to access Computer Science course materials

10.1	It was noted that this was a new problem because traditionally students could come and sit in the back of lectures without any special requests, but as they were all now on locked platforms (notably Moodle) decisions would need to be made about levels of access for other students in the university.
10.2	It was suggested the access to videos would be permitted but additional resources on the departmental website would not normally be available.
10.3	It was noted that there were ways of segregating information on Moodle to prevent universal access to certain areas.
10.4	It was agreed that this was a policy issue and that any change would have to be communicated clearly.
10.5	It was noted that this could well be an issue which would possibly not go away even when face-to face teaching resumed.
10.6	It was agreed to stay with things as they were and then to review this in the summer in readiness for the new academic year.
10.7	It was agreed to add a note to the courses page on the website to invite students to email lecturers direct if they wished to have access to their materials and that it would be the individual lecturer's final decision whether or not access would be allowed
10.8	It was noted that in future, students could also self-enrol as observers, within the limits set up by the department.

11   Any Other Business

11.1   Part 2 projects

11.1.1   Some students were finding it hard to find the relevant pages on the web, some of which were also out of date.
         There was also concern about late feedback from overseers.

11.1.2   It was agreed that deadlines should be set for both students and supervisors, giving students enough time to act on the feedback they were given and that these specific dates should be published well in advance.

Action: Tim Jones

11.2   Foundations of Computer Science

11.2.1   It was reported that a lot of time had been wasted, translating the exam questions from ML to OCaml.

11.2.2   It was agreed that Anil Madhavapeddy would be asked to sort this out.

Action: Tim Jones

11.3   Matchmaking

11.3.1   There had been difficulties with the Matchmaking site in terms of identifying supervisors but this was being reviewed.

Action: Dinah Pounds

Date of next meeting
Monday 25 January 2021