

Department of Computer Science and Technology

Tripes Management Committee

Chairman: Dr Timothy Jones

Secretary: Ms Dinah Pounds

Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Tripes Management Committee  
on Monday 1 March 2021 at 14:00 via Teams

Present

Prof Alastair Beresford (*Deputy HoD*)  
Marion Cobby (*Student Administrator*)  
Dr Hatice Gunes  
Dr Robert Harle  
Dr Sean Holden  
Dr Timothy Jones (*Chairman*)

Helen Neal (*Student Administrator*)  
Dinah Pounds (*Secretary*)  
Prof Frank Stajano  
Caroline Stewart  
Dr Ian Wassell (*Chair of Examiners*)  
Dr Damon Wischik

**1 Apologies for Absence**

None.

**2 Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting**

With no corrections made, the minutes were signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**3 Update on pending actions from meeting of 25 January 2021**

3.1 Tim Jones reported that he had talked to John Crowcroft who confirmed that he intended to teach Principles of Communications ‘live’ next year so the issue of shorter videos would no longer be relevant; it was noted that if live teaching were not possible then some help would be provided to re-do the videos to last for more hours than currently (*item 4.3*).

3.1.1 It was noted that if in-person lectures were not to be possible then live on-line lecturing could perhaps be offered rather than anything pre-recorded, which may result in a better outcome.

3.2 Computer Vision, Part II: it was confirmed that Cengiz did not wish to take this over next year as he was proposing a new Part III course (*item 4.5*).

- 3.2.1 It was agreed that as numbers on this course were high, something should be offered in its place to cover the topic area even if not so specifically.
- 3.2.2 The Committee needed to know what would be offered in his new Part III course and whether this could also be offered as a Part II unit as a replacement to the current Computer Vision course. *(Action TMJ)*
- 3.3 It was noted that Robert Harle had agreed to take over Part II Information Theory, as a lecture-based course *(item 4.5.1)*.
- 3.4 Translation of exam questions from ML to OCaml *(item 4.6)*.
- 3.4.1 It was noted that the exam questions had been translated and also some solutions for a certain period of time. It was agreed that as questions had all been translated the supervisors could pick up the solutions.
- 3.4.2 Markus Kuhn should be asked to add a link to a large PDF of past papers and that updated questions and solutions would be available on a newer link. *(Action TMJ)*
- 3.5 It was confirmed that Part II Cryptography would be covered by Martin Kleppmann during Markus's sabbatical and that Part II Digital Signal Processing would be covered by one of Rafal Mantiuk's post-doc students with oversight by Ian Wassell as UTO back-up *(item 5.1.3)*.
- 3.6 It was noted that exam question preparation had been undertaken using an SVN repository, and that it was being well used *(item 5.1.6)*.
- 3.6.1 It was suggested that it should be reviewed at the end of the academic year with a possible introduction of cloud storage for it in future.
- 3.6.2 It was agreed that somebody would need to be in place in good time to learn the processes from Markus before he went on sabbatical. *(Action: DP)*
- 3.7 It was reported that on-line update meetings at the beginning of term would continue *(item 5.2.5)*.
- 3.7.1 It was reported that the hotline invitation for questions was now running in parallel and was generating interest.
- 3.7.2 It was agreed that the on-line option for questions was important as there was no opportunity, at present, to ask questions after lectures.
- 3.8 Lecture video guidance – it was agreed that this would be standard agenda item at the beginning of each term *(item 5.3)*. *(action DP)*
- 3.9 It was noted that the number of supervisions needed to be updated on the website *(item 5.4)*. *(action DP)*
- 3.10 It was agreed that the weblink to the feedback page would be posted to the Teams 'chat' prior to the next meeting of TMC, for committee members to access. *(action DP)*
- 3.11 It was reported that a request had been made to the Head of Department for an additional UTO for MLRD but that a reply was still being awaited *(item 10.2.2)*. *(action CS)*
- 3.12 Robert Harle reported that his initial suggestion to students that project details could be finalised before the end of term had not been welcomed, as it was felt that those students on internships over the summer would not be able to start on their project and therefore they would be disadvantaged *(item 11.6)*.

- 3.12.1 Due to this strong opinion from students, he had not yet prepared a proposal for the committee to consider. The Committee suggested using the time just before the start of Michaelmas term. Dr Harle was asked to bring another proposal to the next meeting.  
(*action RKH*)
- 3.12.2 It was suggested that potential supervisors could give a brief presentation, or provide a recording, about their academic area, in order for students to get an idea about whom they may choose to work with.
- 3.13 It was confirmed that Tripos examination guidance would be produced by the Chair of Examiners, in parallel to anything produced centrally (*item 12.3*).
- 3.14 Teaching Assistants (TAs) support for ticks – it was noted that this suggestion had been taken to the Head of Department but that a parallel proposal was already being developed to encourage PhD students to get involved with ticking and supervision (*item 13*).
- 3.14.1 It was agreed that it was the administration of the ticks which was really needed, and that this may not be something with PhD students would expect to be involved in.
- 3.14.2 It was confirmed that the Department was prepared to fund this if the need was identified.
- 3.14.3 There was differing opinion as to how much the academic staff should be expected to complete the ticking administration.
- 3.14.4 Prof Stajano asked for his dissatisfaction with this ongoing situation to be minuted.
- 3.14.5 It was agreed that a document should be put together, explaining how ticks work and who does what across the whole year, for discussion at the next TMC. Dr Damon Wischik agreed to put this paper together.  
(*action DW*)

#### **4 Other Matters Arising**

- 4.1 Proposal for a course on Mathematics for Computer Science students, from Prof Anuj Dawar:
- 4.1.1 A proposal had been put together by Prof Anuj Dawar for a new syllabus for a Mathematics unit to replace the NST Mathematics course in 1A.
- 4.1.2 It was noted that the proposal had more of a Mathematics focus than Computer Science.
- 4.1.3 Committee members were asked to send comments to the Chair about what they felt should be taken out of or not taken out of the proposal, before he took it back to Anuj and the Mathematics faculty.  
(*action all members to TMJ*)

#### **5 Reports from other committees. SSCoF**

- 5.1 There had been nothing specific to report back, as most issues were related to centrally-driven decisions and plans, rather than at departmental level.

#### **6 Sabbatical request: Prof E. Briscoe**

- 6.1 It was confirmed that this had been agreed as he had no Tripos teaching commitments scheduled for 2021-22.

#### **7 Correspondence**

There was none.

## **8 Part II Unit feedback**

- 8.1 The committee had been asked to consider whether the feedback guidance given to lecturers should be revised.
- 8.2 After considerable discussion it was agreed that all lecturers would be required to give at least a letter grade feedback for each assessed piece of work, along the lines of the published guidance.

## **9 Tripos Course Planning – Lecturer allocation**

- 9.1 The following were confirmed:
  - 9.1.1 Part II Unit – Data Science - Prof Neil Lawrence and Carl Henrik Ek
  - 9.1.2 Part II Unit – Digital Signal Processing - to be covered by one of Rafal Mantiuk's post-doc students with oversight by Ian Wassell as UTO back-up.
  - 9.1.3 Part II Computer Vision – see item 3.2.2

## **10 Course revision for 2021**

- 10.1 1A Interaction Design:
  - 10.1.1 Dr Hatice Gunes confirmed that teaching cover for this had been arranged as she would be on sabbatical. It would start in Easter term 2022.
- 10.2 IB Concurrent and Distributed Systems:
  - 10.2.1 The committee was happy with the objectives and syllabus proposed by Martin Kleppmann in the Distributed Systems part.
  - 10.2.2 The issue of language in David Greaves' part was considered and it was agreed that he should be asked for any specific changes he was proposing, for consideration by the committee. *(action TMJ)*
- 10.3 Part II Principles of Communications:
  - 10.3.1 John Crowcroft had confirmed that he intended to teach Principles of Communications 'live' next year so the issue of shorter videos would no longer be relevant; it was noted that if live teaching were not possible then some help would be provided to re-do the videos to last for more hours than currently.
- 10.4 Renaming of the Computer Design Courses:
  - 10.4.1 IB: Computer Design to become Introduction to Computer Architecture: Prof Simon Moore  
Part II Comparative Architectures to become Advanced Computer Architecture: Dr Robert Mullins  
Part III/MPhil: Advanced Topics in Computer Architecture – no change to be made.
    - 10.4.1.1 These were all agreed.
  - 10.4.2 It was noted that proposed changes to Data Science had been circulated separately. It was suggested that care should be taken to prevent too much overlap with the existing unit.
    - 10.4.2.1 It was noted that 20% of this was ticks, but that it was within the limits of what had been approved in the past.
    - 10.4.2.2 It was agreed that it would be good to also be consistent with the MPhil level. *(action: DP to Lise Gough)*

## **11 Tripos Examinations**

### **11.1 Examination repository:**

11.1.1 It was agreed that solution notes would be kept indefinitely.

11.1.2 It was agreed to hold back 2019 solutions, in order to maintain the practice of having two years' worth.

11.2 Regarding papers and solutions from the second sitting in 2020, it was agreed that the questions should be published but not the solution notes. However, a check would need to be carried out prior to publication, to ensure that none had been re-used for the current set of examinations for summer 2021, with a planned publication date of the beginning of Easter term. *(action: DP/IJW)*

### **11.3 Practice Examinations:**

It was confirmed that these would happen for all years.

## **12 Specification of Part II progress reports**

12.1 A proposal from Alan Mycroft to better specify the contents of the Part II progress report was considered and agreed (attached as Paper 2021-03-01g)

*(action TMJ/DP to update guidance)*

## **13 Part II supervision visibility for Director of Studies**

13.1 The committee considered the suggestion by David Greaves that there could be a portal for Directors of Studies to find out which supervisions their Part II students had undertaken, as there was currently no way to find out.

13.2 It was acknowledged that Directors of Studies would not know about them as the supervisions at Part II are not allocated by the colleges.

13.3 It was agreed that Directors of Studies would be copied into emails from Student Admin regarding allocation of supervisions. *(action: Student Admin)*

## **14 Moodle access for non-CST students**

14.1 Different lecturers use Moodle differently and some would be happy with access by non-CST students when others would not be.

14.2 It was agreed that access to Moodle should be the decision of the individual lecturer.

## **15 Any Other Business**

15.1 It was noted that Directors of Studies were not always able to identify which ticks were due and what they need to be chasing up. It was agreed that, when using Moodle, care needed to be taken to specify the information.

15.2 Lecturers and Student Admin would be asked to provide the tick deadlines on Moodle, to assist the Directors of Studies. *(action: lecturers and Student Admin)*

## **16 Date of next meeting**

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 14.00 via Teams.