



Faculty of Computer Science and Technology
Tripos Management Committee

Chair: Dr Robert Harle

Secretary: Ms Dinah Pounds

Unconfirmed minutes of a meeting of the Tripos Management Committee
on Monday 29 November 2021 at 14:00 via Zoom

Members

Prof Alastair Beresford (<i>Deputy HoD</i>) (ARB)	Prof Frank Stajano (<i>Advisor</i>) (FMS)
Ms Marion Cobby (<i>Minutes</i>) (MJC)	Caroline Stewart (CS)
Dr David Greaves (<i>Chair of Examiners</i>) (DJG)	(<i>Departmental Secretary</i>) (CS)
Dr Robert Harle (<i>Chair; Director, undergraduate teaching</i>) (RKH)	Dr Damon Wischik (<i>Deputy Director, Part II undergraduate teaching</i>) (DJW)
Dr Evangelia Kalyvianaki (<i>Advisor</i>) (EK)	Dr Jeremy Yallop (<i>Deputy Director, IB undergraduate teaching</i>) (DJW)
Dinah Pounds (<i>Secretary</i>) (DP)	
Dr Thomas Sauerwald (<i>Deputy Director, IA undergraduate teaching</i>) (TMS)	

1 Apologies for Absence

Dr Evangelia Kalyvianaki
Caroline Stewart

2 Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting of 11 October 2021

- 2.1 With no corrections to be made the minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 2.2 It was noted that future minutes should ensure that Professors were correctly identified, if they were in agreement with this.

3 Update on pending actions

- 3.1 Pre-arrival Course:
 - 3.1.1 This was an ongoing issue and would be discussed at the next meeting of TMC in January 2022.
- 3.2 A proposal had been made by Dr Thomas Sauerwald to make the website more complete and self-contained (*item 8.4.1*).
 - 3.2.1 Stewart Carswell had replied to Dinah Pounds and had identified that some of the work required would be relatively easy and quick but that other tasks would take longer and would therefore need to be discussed with his line manager first.
 - 3.2.2 Email from Stewart Carswell to Dinah Pounds to be circulated to members of the committee (*action: DP*).
- 3.3 Discussion paper on the process for syllabus change (*item 9*):
 - 3.3.1 This was still in progress and would be circulated for discussion at the next meeting of TMC (*action: RKH*).
- 3.4 Themes and issues discussion paper for each year group, from previous TMC (*item 11.2*):

3.4.1 Individual Deputy Directors were invited to take their year section of the paper and to focus on the first few items, in discussion with colleagues, in order to move a number of issues and considerations forward and to identify solutions (*action: Deputy Directors, Undergraduate Teaching*).

3.4.2 The Director of Undergraduate Teaching would address the items in the 'Universal' column (*action: Director, Undergraduate Teaching*).

4 Other matters arising

4.1 There were no other matters arising.

5 Reports from other committees

5.1 Director of Studies Forum, 15 October 2021:

5.1.1 This had been mostly a one-way information meeting with nothing flagged up for TMC action.

5.2 SCoF, 24 November 2021:

5.2.1 It was agreed that some parts of the notes of the meeting were difficult to understand, and that the IB student rep may need some advice about clear note-taking.

5.2.2 The reference to internships and the phrase 'being similar to other universities' was unclear. The Chair agreed he would follow this up at the next SCoF meeting (*action: RKH*).

6 Sabbatical Leave

6.1 The request for sabbatical leave for Professor Alastair Beresford was agreed in principle.

6.2 It was appreciated, however, that cover for Further Java would be needed, and that there could be consideration for it to be incorporated into both Concurrent and Distributed Systems and Computer Networking.

6.3 It was agreed that the Deputy Director for IB should prioritise this to formalise it and to consider it in the context of the whole IB profile (*action: Dr Jeremy Yallop*).

7 Teaching

7.1 Plans for cover of OOP in the absence of Prof Andrew Rice:

7.1.1 Examination: Dr Stephen Cummins had volunteered to mark this but was not prepared to set the question. After some discussion it was agreed that Prof Robert Harle would set the question.

7.1.2 Take-home test, April 2022: This would be harder to arrange as it was a very open-ended format of assessment, known only to Prof Rice. The committee agreed that they would not expect it to be run in the same way as previously, due to the excessive amount of preparatory work required, especially as there were few colleagues with sufficient knowledge of writing Java. However, students were already expecting a take-home test so it could not be withdrawn at this stage.

7.1.3 It was agreed to continue the discussions off-line, with the IA Deputy Director taking the lead, in discussion with Prof Harle (*action: Dr Sauerwald*).

7.2 Unix Tools:

7.2.1 There was concern that the statement that Unix Tools could not be listed as a pre-requisite to IB Security on the basis that Unix Tools is not examinable was pedagogically incorrect, as 'non-examinable' did not mean 'optional'.

7.2.2 It was noted that 'non-examinable' often led to it being time-shifted by the students as they knew it was not compulsory.

7.2.3 It was suggested that it should be listed as a pre-requisite and a compulsory skill for Unix Tools (and also, perhaps, Security), but making it clear that there was no exam question for this course.

7.2.4 This would also apply to Scientific Computing.

7.2.5 The web pages would need to be updated to reflect this.

8 Follow up on recognition for work on the exams system by Dr Kuhn

8.1 Prof Stajano reminded members that he had proposed a formal vote of thanks to Dr Markus Kuhn in recognition of his contribution to the process of the examinations system, but that no response had been received from the HoD Team.

8.2 It was reported that the HoD had been mindful not to act upon this as there was concern that other similar efforts should be rewarded which may have been forgotten and that singling out individuals could become a ranking issue which could be difficult to get right every time.

9 Any Other Business

9.1 Dr Damon Wischik had raised concerns about whether previous adjustments to Part II unit scores had been taken on board, and whether markers for Units of Assessment could be given similar guidance to markers for exam papers, in order to finish up with a median mark close to 32.5/50.

9.1.1 It was noted that there were still some Paper 7 students for summer 2022, so the parity between them would need to be considered, in addition to the parity between different units of assessment where assessors had not taken into account the advice to reduce the relative median.

9.1.2 It was suggested that students should be informed when marks had been rescaled and for any issues to be brought back to TMC at that stage, although it was noted that this would also be discussed in the Examinations Group.

9.2 It was suggested that Moodle pages for IA and IB could be set up with one page per course rather than one page per paper, to give lecturers more freedom.

9.3 Prof Stajano proposed a future discussion about the open/closed book examination issue. It was reported that Prof Anuj Dawar was looking into this in detail due to the uncertainty about the immediate future, but that any decision would be made by the Examinations Board in any case.

9.4 It was agreed that Examiners should tabulate the causes for the late tick requests, for discussion at TMC.

9.5 Prof Robert Harle recorded his grateful thanks and those of the committee for the efforts and contributions of Dinah Pounds, Teaching Administration Manager, to the work of the TMC over the past ten years, on the occasion of her retirement. These thanks were endorsed by all members of the committee.

Date of next meeting: Monday 24 January 2022