



Faculty of Computer Science and Technology  
Minutes of a meeting of the Tripos Management Committee

Monday 23 January 2023 14:00 via Zoom

**Members**

Mrs Helen Averill (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration Manager*) (HPA)  
Ms Marion Cobby (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration; Minutes*) (MJC)  
Prof Robert Harle (*Chair; Director, undergraduate teaching*) (RKH)  
Dr Evangelia Kalyvianaki (*Advisor*) (EK)  
Dr Neel Krishnaswami (*Deputy Director, IA undergraduate teaching*) (NK)  
Dr Rafal Mantiuk (*Chair of Examiners*) (RKM)  
Ms Helen Neal (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration*) (HN)  
Prof Thomas Sauerwald (*Deputy HoD*) (TMS)  
Prof Frank Stajano (*Advisor*) (FMS)  
Caroline Stewart (*Departmental Secretary*) (CS)  
Dr Damon Wischik (*Deputy Director, Part II undergraduate teaching*) (DJW)  
Dr Jeremy Yallop (*Deputy Director, IB undergraduate teaching*) (JDY)

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Prof Thomas Sauerwald, Dr Jeremy Yallop.

**2 Notification of AoB**

None

**3 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 21 November 2022**

3.1 The following corrections were made:

3.1.1 Item 6.2.3: this was re-written as follows:

‘Helen Averill confirmed that Part II extension and mitigation requests should now come from individual students (via College Tutor) to EAMC.’

3.1.2 Item 6.5.1: the use of ‘term’ was incorrect and was corrected to ‘course’.

3.2 With these corrections made, the minutes were approved.

**4 Action from the meeting of 21 November 2022**

4.1 It was confirmed that the issue of clarifying on the website that ‘making code available either intentionally or otherwise, should not happen before the completion of exams’ (*item 3.1.1*) was still ongoing and would be added as a supplementary item on the agenda of the next meeting of the Faculty Board.

4.1.1 Outcome: The Head of Department had agreed the text for this academic year. The text would be reviewed and updated for next academic year, to come in line with the wording for Part III.

4.4 It was confirmed that the Chair of Examiners had now reviewed the Marking & Classing and Deadlines & Extensions Guidelines (*items 8.4.2 and 8.4.5*) and that final drafts had been added to the Faculty Board Agenda for 22 October 2022, for approval.

- 4.4.1 Outcome: It was confirmed that both documents had been approved and, after small updates, had been re-approved at the Faculty Board meeting on 17 January 2023.
- 4.5 It was confirmed that the Chair of Examiners would consider the issue of the dropping of norm-referencing (*item 8.4.3*), including undertaking conversations with concerned individuals, particularly re Part II, and report back to the next meeting of the TMC.
- 4.5.1 Outcome: this had now all been done and there was nothing further to report.
- 4.7 It was noted that the requested wider response to Prof Frank Stajano's paper on Ticks and Plagiarism (*item 8.6.5*) was still underway and that outcomes would be presented to the next meeting of the TMC.
- 4.7.1 Outcome: the IB student rep had circulated a survey to gauge opinion but Prof Stajano did not think that the questions on the survey represented the original issue (ie whether or not ticks should be retained, but not to carry any marks). It was agreed that the Chair would talk off-line to the 1A and 1B Deputy Directors of Studies and report back to the next meeting of the TMC (**action: RKH**).
- 4.8 It was confirmed that discussions had taken place to see if the timetable could accommodate the proposal of IA and IB lectures to be in the mornings only (*item 8.7.5*). It was noted that there could be potential movement in the Lent term timetable but none in Easter due to teaching only taking place in the first half of the term.
- 4.8.1 Outcome: After consideration it was noted that there was very little option to move any of the afternoon teaching to the morning for Lent Term. This was a manageable situation but still worthy of continued consideration as it was still a concern, especially for those students with sporting activity commitments.
- 4.11 It was confirmed that Dr Damon Wischik would arrange a discussion with EAMC about Unit of Assessment choices for intermitters (*item 8.8.3.4*) and report back to the TMC meeting on 23 January 2023.
- 4.11.1 Outcome: Dr Wischik had contacted EAMC but had had no response. It was agreed that the policy should be discussed off-line with a report to be considered at the next meeting of the TMC, whether or not EAMC had replied (**action: DJW**).
- 4.12 It was confirmed that the Chair would inform Prof Neil Lawrence that there had been no support for the change of the term 'Overseer' to 'Checker' (*item 8.10.3*) but that he would be welcome to make a written case for his proposed change if he felt strongly about it.
- 4.12.1 Outcome: The Chair had informed Prof Lawrence and there was nothing further to report.
- 4.14 There was concern that the policy around lecture-capture differed from other departments and that it had never been discussed by the TMC. It was agreed that the specific text to be taken to the HoD Team should be produced by Dr Damon Wischik, Prof Frank Stajano and Prof Thomas Sauerwald, with a formal request for a response from the HoD Team to be provided to the next meeting of the TMC (**action: DJW, FMS and TMS**). It was also noted that these same concerns over lack of discussion with TMC should be taken to Faculty Board, with a request for it to be raised as a specific agenda item.
- 4.14.1 Outcome: it was reported that events had moved on significantly since the previous TMC meeting. The Head of Department had made a decree for this term which was assumed would become a policy (currently being worked on by the Head of Department).
- 4.16 It was agreed that Prof Rafal Mantiuk, Chair of Examiners, would undertake a lightweight review of Discrete Mathematics (*item 6.3.1*). This had been in response to comments in the Examiners' Report of June 2022 that the marks awarded had been noticeably lower this past year, although this was the first time it had occurred. The review would identify whether or not anything, in fact, needed to be done.
- 4.16.1 Prof Mantiuk confirmed that he had made investigations and that the questions written by Prof Fiore were more difficult than those set by Prof Stajano. The action was taken to speak to Prof Fiore to suggest a more thorough review of the exam questions for the 2023 Easter examinations (**action: RKM**).
- 4.16.2 Prof Stajano confirmed that the two parts of this subject were quite different, with the first part being much more mathematical. The same situation with Algorithms had been resolved the previous year by dividing them into Algorithms 1 and Algorithms 2, which might be something to consider for Discrete Mathematics too.
- 4.17 Prof Thomas Sauerwald, Deputy Head of Department, expressed concern that, prior to the beginning of the academic year, people appeared to find it difficult to identify which papers were in which course, and that there seemed to be a general lack of information and details which could be easily

found on the course web pages (*item 6.5.2*). He requested that details of timings and details could be put in the same place on web pages, including syllabus updates. It was thought that it would be easier to find supervisors if all of the relevant information could be found in one place. Helen Averill to speak to Stewart Carswell regarding an update of the website syllabus pages according.

- 4.17.1 Outcome: The syllabus pages had now been updated to include the relevant term, relevant exam paper, Moodle, and a link to the timetable page. Thanks were recorded to Stewart Carswell and Markus Kuhn.
- 4.18 It was confirmed that any request for a Teaching Assistant (TA) would need TMC approval, as each request would need to be considered individually (*item 6.6.3*). Members were invited to submit requests in writing, including details of hours and payment level when considering the engagement of a TA. It was agreed that a document outlining the procedure should be produced, in order to form a departmental policy on the issue.
  - 4.18.1 Outcome: Guidelines had been produced by RKH and CS.
  - 4.18.2 A document written around the procedure for appointing TAs had been produced by Prof Harle. It was noted that additional comments from other TMC members would need to be considered for inclusion, which would be requested off-line (**action: RKH**).
  - 4.18.3 It was confirmed that Caroline Stewart would check that this policy was in line with ACS in order to have a combined approach. This would be discussed at the new Strategy Group with the decision to be reported to the next meeting of TMC (**action: CS and RKH**).
- 4.19 Dr Damon Wischik expressed his belief that a 25% penalty for a UoA was too harsh, as it was the same as the penalty for a Part II dissertation, and that the only redress available was via the EAMC process. This did not receive universal agreement, as it was felt that the UoAs contributed more to the overall mark and were in lieu of examinations, so the penalty was deemed to be fair. Dr Wischik was invited to put together a proposed policy to address his concerns, for discussion at the next meeting of the TMC.
  - 4.19.1 Outcome: Dr Wischik showed his draft policy on-screen at the meeting.
  - 4.19.2 After considerable discussion, it was suggested that all UoA lecturers should be invited to submit a short proposal for the coming academic year, which would be reviewed at the next TMC, using Dr Wischik's wording as a guideline to produce their proposals, including the idea of the addition of any penalties to be applied (**action DJW**).

## 5 Other matters arising

- 5.1 There were no other matters arising.

## 6 General Teaching Matters

### 6.1 Feedback

- 6.1.1 It was confirmed that the link to the Michaelmas Term feedback was:  
<https://www.vle.cam.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=251171>
- 6.1.2 The Chair confirmed that he would ask the Deputy Directors of each year group to discuss any concerns which had been raised, with the relevant lecturers (**action: RKH to NK, JDY and DJW**).
- 6.1.3 It was, however, acknowledged that the return rate was so low that it was not possible to gain a realistic picture, and that an alternative approach should be identified. However, the issue of having feedback from students was deemed to be important, in order to support lecturers if needed, especially with the imminent influx of new lecturers.
- 6.1.4 It was agreed that a programme should be developed whereby the assessment of new lecturers could be tracked, in order to have a structure in place to improve teaching standards.

### 6.2 Future of OOP

- 6.2.1 Due to the absence of both Dr Andy Rice and Prof Alastair Beresford this year, the ticks for OOP had been made optional and the course had been taught by a temporary lecturer (who had received excellent feedback).
- 6.2.2 It was felt that the delivery of OOP should remain the same for the coming academic year but that it would form part of the general review of the teaching of programming languages.

### 6.3 Programming languages teaching

- 6.3.1 Members were reminded that there had been a plan to review the teaching of programming languages, which would still need to be undertaken.
- 6.3.2 It was agreed that a small working group should be formed by the deputy directors for 1A and 1B, to investigate the details of the programming teaching in other universities, and to report back to the next TMC. The Chair agreed to contact them offline about this and to invite them to report back to the next TMC (**action: RKH to NK and JDY**)
- 6.3.3 It was noted that there could still be an issue for other courses if programming were to be taught differently.
- 6.4 Student Feedback**
- 6.4.1 Although a different process had been introduced in Michaelmas term, the response rate had not improved. There was a belief that students were not engaging with the surveys as they felt that the issues they raised were not being responded to.
- 6.4.2 Alternative suggestions had been made by students, including the use of the *Fastcups* app, which SysAdmin were currently investigating, which had its merits but would also be quite challenging (instantaneous reaction from students to the lecturing in real-time).
- 6.4.3 The Chair confirmed that he would be happy to pilot this with a few lecturers who were interested but that it would not ever be compulsory for all classes. It was felt that this would be indication to students that their concerns were being responded to.
- 6.4.4 It was suggested that the surveys could be substantially simplified, to be reduced to three questions: 'rate your course 1-10'; 'what needs to be improved?', 'what was good?'
- 6.4.5 There was also a suggestion of the use of focus groups and panels, rather than metrics alone.
- 6.5 Sabbaticals 2023-24**
- 6.5.1 The following sabbaticals were confirmed:  
Michaelmas Term 2023: Dr Ferenc Huszár and Dr Sean Holden;  
Lent Term 2024: Prof Frank Stajano and Dr Sean Holden;  
Finalised details for Prof Amanda Prorok were yet to be confirmed.
- 6.5.2 It was confirmed that all teaching would be covered without any issues.
- 6.6 SysAdmin support**
- 6.6.1 It was reported that there had been AV problems on the first day of teaching in the lecture theatre but there had been no SysAdmin staff available to help.
- 6.6.2 The committee agreed that there needed to be some level of technical support at all times during teaching weeks and that this would be taken forward by Caroline Stewart to the HoD Team. It was reported that the HoD Team were planning to discuss this issue due to it having already been raised by a number of people on various occasions (**action: CS**).
- 6.7 Part II**
- 6.7.1 Part II Units of Assessment draft list for 2023-24 (Paper 6.7.1)
- 6.7.1.1 The paper provided had been for report only. It was confirmed that any changes would be brought to the TMC if the need arose.
- 6.7.2 Proposed new UoA – Natural Language Processing with Deep Learning (Paper 6.7.2)
- 6.7.2.1 The committee agreed that they would like to see a more detailed syllabus before approving this new UoA, due to concerns that there may be too much overlap with existing courses as well as ACS.
- 6.7.2.2 It was confirmed that the ACS team had already requested more information. Once available this would be circulated to the TMC by Helen Averill (**action: HPA**).
- 7 Any Other Business**
- 7.1 It was reported that a couple of plagiarism vivas had recently taken place, one of which had been a student submitting another student's work purely by accident.
- 7.2 It was suggested a tick box could be introduced, for the students to confirm that the submission was their own work (as happens in other departments) and that it might be integrated on Moodle. (**action: HPA**).

**Date of next meeting: 27 February 2023, 14:00 via Zoom.**