UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Department of Computer Science and Technology

Unconfirmed Minutes
Faculty of Computer Science and Technology
Meeting of the Tripos Management Committee

Monday 20 November at 14:00 via Zoom

https://cam-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/81313610190?pwd=K0lxT3NMQmpTOERTQmozaVNhdkR5dz09

AGENDA

Members

Prof Robert Harle (*Chair; Director, undergraduate teaching*) (RKH) ✓
Prof Paula Buttery (*Advisor*) (PB) ✓
Prof Anuj Dawar (*Advisor*) (AD) X
Ms Helen Neal *(Undergraduate Teaching Co-ordinator)* (HN) ✓
Prof Thomas Sauerwald (Deputy HoD) (TMS) ✓
Caroline Stewart (*Departmental Secretary)* (CS) ✓
Becky Straw (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration Manager*) (BS) ✓
Dr Jamie Vicary (*Chair of Examiners*) (JV) ✓
Dr Damon Wischik (*Deputy Director, Part II undergraduate teaching)* (DJW) ✓
Dr Jeremy Yallop (*Deputy Director, IB undergraduate teaching)* (JDY) X
Lise Gough (Postgraduate Education Manager) (LG) ✓
Joy Rook (Postgraduate Education Administrator) (JR) ✓
Dean Dodds (Minutes; *Undergraduate Teaching Co-ordinator*) (DD) ✓

1	**Apologies for Absence**
	Carl Henrik Ek
	Jeremy Yallop
2	**Notification of AoB**
	None
3	**Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 16 October 2023**
	Approved.
4	**Action from the meeting of 16 October 2023**

4.1   DJW summarised intermitters and completing units of assessments (item 4.1). The guidance was to not allow people to resume part completed work. DJW will circulate guidance. **(Action: DJW)**.

DJW circulated it after the last meeting. RKH noted this would be relevant to BS.
DJW asked if there were any requests to change the policy. RKH stated it was university policy.
DJW expanded that this had not been adopted by the department yet, asked if it should be adopted and published. RKH wondered if it should go to faculty board.

PB spoke about various scenarios and ways this could impact students. RKH thought this would be an AMC matter, DJW agreed that the guidance included room for flexibility.

JV asked if students could retake the same modules. DJW explained that work completed prior to intermission was retained, but incomplete work cannot be completed after intermission, the student must start fresh. JV asked if a student passionate about AI would have to choose a new subject they were not interested in. RKH agreed that it was correct and pointed out exceptions and flexibility.

4.2   Discussion about whether 25% penalty for a UoA was too harsh. It was confirmed that no progress had been made on this yet and that it would be rolled over to the next meeting of TMC. Meanwhile, it would be discussed between RKH and BS in their weekly meetings Status: Action still outstanding. RKH will discuss with BS. **(Action: RKH/BS)**.

RKH had not had time to look at this. **(Action: RKH)**.

4.3   Increase of four more lectures in Concepts of Programming Languages - RKH to discuss with Neel and circulate for email approval (item 4.3). TMS believed concepts of programming was supposed to be extended, but had not been. RKH will follow up with Neal. Believed it was eight hours as twelve was too much. Will look at to see if this needs to be bigger and a tripos issue. Status: Rob to follow-up accordingly **(action RKH)**.

RKH had contacted Neel but had not received a response and plans to meet him. **(Action: RKH)**.

4.4   Issues with DNN were discussed, in terms of the late changes with the course in 22-23, thus resulting in students working on the assignment over the late vacation. There should be some official discussion with the course leaders regarding the issues that arose. RKH explained that there was a problem with the assignment, a part was impossible. Extensions were given without following guidelines. Students intend to complain and expect an investigation into this. Will discuss it next time. **Action: RKH.**

RKH summarised the history of this issue.

JV stated there were no formal complaints that he was aware of. JV explained that DNN was an outlier with high marks and students given additional time by lecturers. Felt this was unfair. Examiners did not wish to change marks themselves as this is a last resort. Went back to lecturers and asked them to remark. Full marks require an almost perfect answer, bringing it in line with other modules.

RKH explained that additional feedback had been released to students, no complaints.
JV stated the lecturers will be contacted and asked to bring assessment in-line with other modules.

DJW commented that he had received feedback from a part two student, who recognised this was an outlier.

4.5   Assessment criteria for dissertations
The examiners would like to revise the assessment criteria for dissertations. JV to upload the proposed changes to the Google drive so people could comment. RKH noted that IBs had most likely already seen the marking scheme, so can't make changes for this year. RKH will figure out if the changes can be made this year or not. Felt it was a good idea and would change if possible. **(Action: RKH, JV)**

RKH summarised that we can change assessment criteria. RKH wishes to do this.

JV felt the comments in the previous meeting pulled in different directions which could not be completed. Asked if there should be a working group. RKH wished to revisit this later in the meeting.

4.6   RKH looked at LLM policy. RM suggested asking students to sign the text regarding ChatGPT earlier. Some lecturers in favour of an outright ban. Could be used as an intelligent search engine but not as part of the work. RM wishes to look at the wording and to improve it.
RKH asked JV to look into this. JV wished to look at the Russell group statement on AI. JV will deliver this at the next meeting or before. **(Action: JV)**.

JV spoke about a Russell group statement
https://russellgroup.ac.uk/news/new-principles-on-use-of-ai-in-education/ which was vague.
Looked at our current statement
https://www.cst.cam.ac.uk/teaching/part-ii/projects/dissertation and
https://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/definition. JV believed we should encourage students to use these tools. We should restrict their use but not ban outright.

PB believed NLP students would be using these tools for their work already. Suggested educating them on the issue and including a statement about having their own critical analysis of the AI tools output. DJW agreed and added that the university's definition of plagiarism didn't include ChatGPT as it doesn't count as a person, but if ChatGPT has used someone else's work, it may be plagiarising and the student is unintentionally doing so.

TMS spoke about students who didn't use ChatGPT and felt disadvantaged.

RKH noted that students shouldn't be using ChatGPT at all.

Spoke about ticks and using ChatGPT to complete. PB noted that every student used GitHub copilot, viewing it the same way most would view a spell checker.

RKH felt we needed to define cheating and this was a minefield. Suggested creating a working group. PB, JV and DJW will work on this and create a report. RKH wished to circulate this report at the start of the new year and ratify something on the TMC meeting next year. **(Action: PB, JV and DJW).**

4.7   RM spoke about unclassing. No provision for unclassing in documents. JV expanded on this and how older documentation regarding this had been discarded. JV was unsure what a student had to do to be considered unclassed. RKH asked JV and RM to improve the document and bring it back to this meeting. **(Action: JV & RM)**.

JV stated that the option to unclass a student was removed. Wished to restore this and include some guidance. JV received guidance from former examiners. 40% was considered the cutoff for them, one option was to include this with some flexibility on where to draw the boundaries. Should be a large gap between classed and unclassed.

JV had drafted a sentence 'Part II: Examiners will use their judgement to decide which candidates have not reached a suitable level to be awarded honours. This may be appropriate where the overall mark is under 40% (a threshold which may be varied at the discretion of the Examiners), and: the awarded mark is well below that of the lowest classed candidate, or the candidate has otherwise not achieved a reasonable minimum standard for an Honours degree.'
RKH was unsure about 'well below' and how that was defined. JV stated the two factors would be considered, not completing necessary work or significant gap. RKH felt this was still a judgement issue.

DJW suggested this could change over time. RKH preferred slightly different wording 'this is set at the discretion of the examiners and historically this has been 40%'. If everyone is happy, circulate.

DJW asked if there was guidance about the gaps between firsts and 2:1s. JV stated gaps were attempted but couldn't always be located. **(Action: JV)**.

4.8   AD stated that to be a candidate for part II, students needed to obtain honours in 1B. JV and RKH disagreed as both had students without honours. FS pointed to this as an example of unclassing being unclear. BS will look into this. **(Action: BS)**.

BS explained that students must pass each year in order to carry on. Spoke with Melissa Riley about this, can request permission from the EMC. Can block them from graduating with Honours.

JV stated that degrees have changed this year. In previous years students have not had an overall classification, this year they do. RKH felt this wasn't for us to discuss.

4.9   RKH looked at stricter guidance on submission for those sitting exams in colleges. BS will look at this. **(Action: BS)**.

BS had not had chance to look into this yet.

4.10   TMS wished to speak about the tripos review, RKH agreed there was less engagement and not much feedback from everyone in the department, RKH will write things to get responses. DJW thought there would be a discussion groups in each theme. RKH will update at the next meeting. **(Action: RKH - see item 7.4 in agenda)**.

RKH had not worked on this due to illness. Had spoken about teaching and the zero year of PhD students and not turning into our students. Students missing fundamental knowledge. Hopes to circulate something soon.

RKH felt that the supervision system was not working with how they learn a programming language. Suggested a bootcamp as a different approach. Would give a further update at the next TMC.

5   Other matters arising

None.

6   Exams

6.1   Form and Conduct 2024

RKH asked BS if there was anything controversial. No. RKH approved.

6.2   Exam Structure 2024

RKH explained that Bayesian is taught via video as Sean Holden is unavailable, trying to find someone to set exam questions. BS stated that it had not been removed. RKH asked if anyone had suggestions for question setters.

PB pointed that the hours were incorrect. RKH noted that this was published before.

TMS noted that types had one question with four, another had eight, felt it would be more natural to have an even split. RKH agreed and believed it was from when types was taught by two people.
TMS asked if Sean Holden was setting some questions. RKH stated he wasn't and this was an error.

RKH noted that Sean's questions were quite unique and finding someone to write questions in Sean's style was difficult.

CS asked for this to be made an action. RKH stated BS had given him a list of candidates. **(Action: RKH)**.

7   General Teaching Matters

7.1   Sabbatical request – Anuj Dawar (Paper)

RKH felt we may need a replacement and someone to represent us on the maths committee. Asked for any volunteers (if not RKH would do it).

All happy to approve.

7.2   Sabbatical request – Alice Hutchings(Paper)

RKH believed Alice had things covered, with the exception of one unit. This was shared. Slightly nervous about running out of units. Came close this year to running out of units. RKH asked BS to keep track of what was running and getting dropped. **(Action: BS)**.

JV asked if one of Alice's postdocs might cover? RKH felt that it was usually best to let the course go fallow. But would consider this.

7.3   Sabbatical request - Andreas Vlachos (Paper)

RKH did not see any issues, nor did anyone else.

7.4   Sabbatical request - Damon Wishik (Paper)

RKH stated that this sabbatical was well earned. Difficulty for some people to take over DJW's courses.

Need to find people to cover. Some clashes with Frank's sabbatical, but that has not been received yet and CS did not believe Frank would take that sabbatical.

JV asked what the policy was regarding approving sabbaticals if we do not know who will cover. RKH stated that approvals could be made without cover, with the exception of part II and popular courses. The lecturer should do the initial research into finding cover, which DJW had already done and there was lots of interest.

TMS asked if there would be any issue with Carl Henrik Ek being an examiner. RKH spoke about video lectures.

RKH asked if DJW would be happy with his video lecturers being used. And someone else setting exam questions. DJW was happy with the videos and Panopto recordings being reused.

7.5   Payment rates for teaching-related duties (Paper)

[Rates of pay for teaching related duties - Google Docs](#)
CS and TMS wish to have a clearer policy. CS noted we try to err on the generous side.
DJW asked what holiday pay was, CS explained.

RHK was happy with this, wished for it to be published and formalised. CS stated that postgraduate education would look at this first.

7.6   Tripos review

8   **Any Other Business**

DJW requested three TAs for Scientific Computing, twelve hours each. RKH was happy, no objections. DJW and CS will speak. **(Action: DJW & CS)**.

JV brought up a document 'marking guidelines for assessors – new proposal' and walked through the changes between this version and the old version.
RKH was happy that presentation had been taken out and distributed. DJW felt it had not been taken out. JV stated that someone could have a great dissertation with a terrible implementation and vice versa.

RKH noted that we were not making a decision today, the document would be redrafted and be worked on offline.

TMS questioned why literature and referencing wasn't included.

RKH felt that on the topic of contribution to the field, Maybe a contribution to the field (for example, publishable with minor work) explained that the contribution was optional. JV felt this was more challenging as before the contribution could be minor and not publishable.
PB suggested impact as a better term. PB also suggested moving the mention of contribution, further down in the category so it was not as prominent and did not appear to be a priority. Challenging goals and substantial deliverables would appear first and was more indicative of the requirements.

Looked at evaluation and conclusion. DJW commented that in ML projects, students separate evaluation and implementation, but it should be iterative, constantly evaluating and changing the implementation. Suggested diagrams so students would not interpret too narrowly. RKH suggested linking to examples of good past work.
JV pointed to an early section which stated the sections here are not directly linked to the sections of the dissertation. JV worried about writing too much

JV noted that Sean Holden was quite annoyed last year with students simply using libraries. DJW agreed and explained that was what he was trying to say, the evaluation and implementation being iterative and going beyond just a table of results.

RKH and DJW spoke about how different types of projects would require different styles, using examples tailored for ML, robotics, systems and so on.

TMS and JV spoke about purely theoretical projects, which had been discussed last time.

JV asked if we should remove the presentation section and redistribute. TMS and PB wished to keep it.

RKH suggested a compromise, making both sections 30 marks, but with room for the marker to move points as appropriate. JV was against. DJW suggested changing the word implementation to conduct, so it doesn't read as purely code based. RKH wished for this to be discussed offline and to push forward quickly.

Date of next meeting: 22 January 2023 14:00.