

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

Monday 22 Jan at 14:00 via Zoom

Unconfirmed MINUTES

Members

Prof Robert Harle (*Chair; Director, undergraduate teaching*) (RKH) ✓  
Prof Paula Buttery (*Advisor*) (PB) X  
Prof Anuj Dawar (*Advisor*) (AD) ✓  
Dean Dodds (*Minutes; Undergraduate Teaching Administration*) (DD) ✓  
Dr Carl Henrik Ek (CHE) X  
Ms Helen Neal (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration*) (HN) ✓  
Joy Rook (*Postgraduate Education Administrator*) (JR) ✓  
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

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Jeremy Yallop  
Carl Henrik Ek  
Paula Buttery

**2 Notification of AoB**

DJW wished to request TAs for ticking Algorithms.

DJW wished to know if the dissertation document was accepted at the last meeting.

CS wished to discuss group projects.

JV raised the issue of EMAC being incommunicado.

**3 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 20 November 2023**

Approved.

Correct Neel to Anil when discussing Concepts of Programming Languages.

**4 Action from the meeting of 20 November 2023**

- 4.1 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 TMC meeting. RKH will discuss with BS. (Action: RKH/BS).**

RKH looked at penalties, does not wish to take any action at this time.

- 4.2 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 Neel. 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).**

RKH had spoken with Anil about Concepts of Programming Languages, will remain as eight lectures, no changes but will have a bigger discussion about what happens to this course in the following year. Perhaps combine it and make it a 1A course.

- 4.3 LLM policy: 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).**

DJW explained that three policies were developed, reflecting disagreements. DJW and Alan agreed, JV had a different perspective and no one supported the strictest policy. The strictest policy prohibited any use of LLMs with the exception of spellcheck software. The second policy allowed LLM use, provided this use was documented, declared and a reflective statement was written. The third policy allowed some tools in certain situations such as using copilot to assist, but not to write all the text.

RKH felt it was hard to decide on the correct policy. RKH asked for more information on assessment and how to determine if students completed learning objectives and understood their work. RKH did not believe we would have the capacity for more ticking sessions or vivas. DJW believed that certain things could not be practically assessed and ticks have always allowed for many opportunities to cheat. RKH felt ticking vivas were to demonstrate if students understood a task and completed the learning objective even if they had otherwise cheated. DJW suggested setting tick to include tasks ChatGPT performed poorly at so could not be used by students. RKH felt ChatGPT would improve and this method would be a moving target.

TMS suggested fewer but more substantial ticks and felt it would be a shame to abolish ticks.

JV felt students outsourcing work to an LLM was a loss for learning and believed students should do the work themselves. JV did not believe that the ability to cheat is an argument for allowing students to use LLMs and we should force students to grapple with the problem themselves. JV believed this should be solved through supervisions. DJW agreed, integrating code on the example sheet for supervisions. RKH agreed, but noted the supervision system was overwhelmed and not enough time in supervisions to look at the concept and at code. JV believed the entire supervision system needed to be looked at, the value of the supervision system was deploying close attention onto our students and focusing on the appropriate areas. JV suggested that if supervisors are overwhelmed, take certain tasks away from them and focus on a few key areas. DJW believed core things should be assessed in supervisions, if not core, there should not be a tick and it should not be addressed in supervisions. RKH believed this was overly optimistic while DJW believed lecturers were adding too much to example sheets.

RKH explained that if ticks were made optional, there would be pushback from the centre, as pressure would be on end of year exams, putting stress onto students.

RKH looked at the three policies, did not believe anyone was advocating for the most restrictive option. Felt the other two options should be circulated and then voted upon at the next TMC (with the possibility of changing later as we learn from implementation).

JV asked if this was a discussion for the current year, or for next year. RKH felt that as we were in Lent term, we should implement the least restrictive version this year and adopt another next year. JV mentioned option C conflicted with university plagiarism guidelines. DJW disagreed, the policy was carefully written to avoid conflict with the policy. AD believed option C addressed plagiarism concerns.

AD was concerned about adopting an interim measure, believed that if restrictions were lowered it would be hard to row back at a later date. AD believed the most restrictive option should be adopted temporarily.

JV looked at the university misconduct policy 'A student using any unacknowledged content generated by artificial intelligence within a summative assessment as though it is their own work, unless explicitly permitted within the assessment brief, constitutes academic misconduct'. The University published a statement on Artificial Intelligence and academic integrity in Easter 2023. Further guidance will be published in due course, as the University's approach is developed.

RKH agreed that rolling back the least restrictive policy would be difficult, wished to adopt option B temporarily then bring to faculty board. JV wished to reword as this document was for internal discussion. DJW's document will be taken to PVC. TMS agreed it was hard to change as people have already started working on dissertation, RKH felt that there was time but needed to approve quickly.

JV will revise within a week. CS will notify faculty board and ask them to read offline. **(Action: JV & CS).**

**4.4 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 unclassified. 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. Possible wording: 'this is set at the discretion of the examiners and historically this has been 40%'. If everyone is happy, circulate.(Action: JV).**

JV explained that only a sentence in the document was up for discussion 'Examiners will use their judgement to decide which candidates have not reached a suitable level to be awarded honours. In recent years this has been around 40%, a threshold which may be varied at the discretion of the examiners, who will also take into account whether there is a significant gap below the lowest classed candidate, or whether the candidate has otherwise not achieved a reasonable minimum standard for an Honours degree.'

RKH happy with this, next stage is for this to be seen by the faculty board.

**4.5 MLBI exam question setter: RKH stated BS had given him a list of candidates. (Action: RKH)**

**Update: Justin Tan has agreed to set the questions for MLBI.**

This course will be delivered via video, using old recordings. BS explained that questions from Justin Tan will come soon, today or tomorrow. RKH noted that we need to find a checker and will contact Sean to ask if he is willing to do this. **(Action: RKH).**

## 5 Other matters arising

None.

## 6 Exams

### 6.1 Examiners Report 2023 (Paper)

RKH looked at examiners feedback:

- Boundaries between classed and unclassified, RKH felt this was completed
- Discrepancies between the median marks awarded in UOAs and modules should be addressed.
- Exam setters who fail to submit questions in time should be immediately contacted via email if they fail to respond via phone.
- Standardised marking sheets should be provided.
- Students submitting paper exam questions via Moodle should be provided with clear guidelines regarding formatting.

TMC should consider publishing the mark breakdown for all UOAs and modules. Not the policy but happened for one particular module last year, examiners believe this should be the default. RKH did not have a strong opinion on this. DJW noted that in the past modules were not marked equally and had attempted to contact the lectures to address this, unsuccessfully. Examiners had addressed this, but unhappily. DJW did not believe airing this publicly was the best way to solve this. JV did not agree with publishing the report, would encourage students to select easy modules in an attempt to game it. TMS also agreed that this data should not be made public, although wondered why it was done with exam questions and both should not be published.

DJW felt the fact things were gameable was the issue. RKH suggested leaving this for a year, and reviewing after next round of exams, DJW agreed and if JV was correct examiners were correcting inequality, then the issue should be addressed. JV asked if we had historical data and suggested looking at that. DJW had found systematic problems with the previous three years' worth of data.

RKH stated that TMC would take no action for now but would like to review after the exam period. JV will report back and asked DJW to circulate stats he had analysed.

## 7 General Teaching Matters

### 7.1 Sabbatical request – Rafal Mantiuk (Paper)

**Update: Cengiz has agreed to take on IA Introduction to Graphics. To be delivered either by himself or one of his postdocs**

RKH had previously raised the lack of cover, but felt this was now covered. Asked if anyone had objections. CS did not feel different about the sabbatical, but asked if we needed more detail about the postdoc. RKH was happy, as long as Cengiz was the UTO and the buck stopped with him, remind Cengiz about lecturing policy.

### 7.2 IB Data Science sabbatical cover (Paper)

DJW had found someone to cover IB data science and had circulated their CV. RKH believed they were qualified but did not know if the person could teach. RKH asked if DJW would make recordings of his lectures available, DJW was willing to do this.

RKH was happy. JV asked what contractual relationship he would have with the department. DJW explained he was on sabbatical, unsure who was hosting him in Cambridge, but noted he had a shared office in engineering. DJW assumed this fell into the guest lecture category. RKH stated that guest lecturing policy did not cover an entire course and there would need to be a contact. CS did not believe there could be a contact but could be paid as a casual worker. RKH wished for a UTO to be attached to this, willing to do it himself. DJW suggested Pietro or Sean as the responsible UTO. RKH pencilled himself in and would discuss with Sean upon his return.

### **Lecture feedback mechanisms**

#### **7.3**

Only a small number of students gave feedback. BS had suggested an electronic feedback systems be purchased, one which can handle simple feedback such as happy or sad, this would then be brought out during the final lectures and we could see problem courses and seek further feedback on them. RKH asked for everyone's opinion. DJW liked this idea, but asked about back to back lecturers. RKH had a few ideas but would figure it out later. TMS liked the idea but worried about triple lecturers. RKH suggested putting it in the lecture theatre. DJW did not wish to remove the existing feedback mechanism, suggested making a text feedback form available to students. Having more people would allow us to ignore biased individuals with do not represent the wider view. RKH clarified that the existing survey would still be available, but students would not be chased to fill this in.

### **Tripes review (paper to follow)**

#### **7.4**

RKH wished for people to comment on the tripos review document and give feedback before being presented on the 31<sup>st</sup>. After that date, RKH intended to create groups to examine the syllabus.

JV thanked RKH for the work he had done. Would like to see more on the process for reaching recommendations. RKH explained the process would be to setup individual working groups, research and collate multiple recommendations. JV agreed although wished this to be stated in the document. RKH will pass on to other members of TMC who are not present. **(Action: RKH)**.

### **Shabbat**

#### **7.5**

RKH explained that a student is not able to work on Friday due to Shabbat, which conflicts with MLRD. Surprised this issue had not come up before. Solved for this year, but questioned if we had accidentally created a situation where we structural discriminate against a group, which was not our intention. RKH wondered what we should do in the future. AD spoke about the time when we had Saturday morning lecturers, believed there was a policy for those who cannot attend for religious reasons. RKH through so, but could not find anything, neither could CS. DJW mentioned that the equalities act was introduced in 2010, which could explain why this had not occurred before. RKH believed we should seek out a central response, but not sure who. CS will find the correct person to speak to. **(Action: CS)**.

## **8**

### **Any Other Business**

#### **8.1 Updated Undergraduate Admissions Governance (Paper)**

RKH summarised that the document wished for another body to be created which handles admissions.

RKH did not believe this had any impact at a departmental level, but asked if anyone else had noticed anything. No one else had.

BS will feedback that we have no objections and no preferences. **(Action: BS)**.

## 8.2 Algorithms Assistance

DJW requested funding for 24 hours of ticker time for assistance in Algorithms. Had not yet found people. RKH believed this was sensible, no objections. RKH asked DJW to proceed. **(Action: DJW)**.

## 8.3 Guidance for Dissertation Marking Approval approved

DJW asked if this had been approved.

JV felt this was approved at the last meeting. RKH wished for the minutes to be revised to clarify that this had been approved. BS to circulate to students, directors of studies and department. **(Action: DD & BS)**.

## 8.4 Group Projects

HN and Alan Blackwell had discussed restarting in person group project demonstrations which had been discontinued due to Covid-19, Alastair supported this. Alan wished another UTO to work alongside him, would require support from teaching and comms. RKH wished this to be a hybrid event having the best of both worlds, in person and with video recordings. The reason for this was in the past many clients could not make it to the in person demonstrations, which biased voting.

No objections.

## 8.5 EAMC

BS explained that EAMC had stopped making decisions regarding extension requests, many outstanding from MT and the deadline was approaching. RKH believed the tutor should be chasing the EAMC. CS felt this was a consequence of the marking boycott. RKH suggested writing to the tutor informing them that EAMC 'we have not heard from the EAMC, this will not be granted'.

## 8.6 Supervision Material

TMS explained that timothy had created a spreadsheet summarising the various supervision materials for all forty-six courses, only twenty-seven had model answers or hints. Five courses did not have example sheets. TMS will circulate to TMC. **(Action: TMS)**.

**Date of next meeting: 26 Feb 2024 14:00.**