



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Department of Computer
Science and Technology

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

Monday 24 November at 14:00 via Zoom

<https://cam-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/82797429443?pwd=LhcAVGnV1RqPr5akxEv7N9DsIJhqfU.1>

UNCONFIRMED Minutes

Members

Prof Robert Harle (*Chair; Director, undergraduate teaching*) (RKH) ✓
Prof Paula Buttery (*Deputy HoD*) (PJB) ✓
Aidan Bishop (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration*) (AB) ✓
Dean Dodds (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration - minutes*) (DD) ✓
Lise Gough (*Postgraduate Education Manager*) (LG) X
Dr Tobias Grosser (*Deputy Director, IB undergraduate teaching*) (TCG) X
Dr Martin Kleppmann (*Deputy Director, Part II undergraduate teaching*) (MK) ✓
Dr Roman Kolcun (*Advisor*) (RK) ✓
Dr Jon Sterling (*Advisor*) (JS) ✓
Caroline Stewart (*Departmental Secretary*) (CS) ✓
Becky Straw (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration Manager*) (BS) ✓
Prof Simone Teufel (*Chair of Examiners*) (SHT) ✓
Prof Jamie Vicary (*Deputy Director, IA undergraduate teaching*) (JV) X

1 Apologies for Absence

Lise Gough
Joy Rook
Jamie Vicary

2 Declarations of Interest

None

3 Notification of AoB

None

4 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 30 June 2025

Approved

5 Action from the meeting of 30 June 2025

Completed actions from the last meeting can be found in the document 'completed TMC actions'
[Copy of Completed TMC actions](#)

5.1

(4.1) PB noted that Engineering and MML had upper bands on the supervision hours they expected. Colleges would have seen this from other departments but not us. RKH and MK will take the matter of Part II project supervision payment guidance to the DoS forum.

(Action: RKH to take to DoS Forum).

Still outstanding, RKH asked BS to add this to the agenda of the next DoS meeting **(Action: BS)**. RKH will no longer be chairing the DoS committee so this will be dealt with by Cecilia Mascolo.

MK believed there was guidance on this. PJB clarified that the guidance in question is on upper bands for projects rather than an average. Part of this is a fairness concern to prevent some students getting more help than others.

PJB had seen a document questioning the timing of supervisions, for example, could supervisions be conducted on a Saturday. PJB wished to include this document and send to DoS forum. **(Action: Cecilia Mascolo)**.

5.2

(4.2) RKH asked CHE to provide more information about students gaming the system. CHE said it would be quite anecdotal but would write a few paragraphs. File from CHE:

[unit-of-assessment-marks-scaling.pdf](#) **(Action: ST)**

CHE has provided a document summarising this. RKH drew attention to the final paragraph which points out that students are fully aware that we scale marks, so are incentivised to choose subjects taken by weaker students. RKH believed it was hard to fairly assess modules. This matter had been discussed before so no need to discuss further.

RKH thanked CHE for writing this document.

5.3

(4.3) Point 22, RKH wished to have Damon's feedback re target median as he had created the current recommendation. AVSM wondered if there needed to be a zero hurdle model. RKH asked CHE to write a response, TMC will consider at the next meeting. BS asked CHE for comment.

(Action: JV to liaise with Damon and bring this item back to the next TMC)

Have not received feedback from Damon yet. JV should look at this next time **(Action: JV)**.

SHT had asked all module convenors for the amount of time they expect students to spend. The website currently states five hours per week including lectures, however in 2016 Alan and David had concluded five hours per week excluding lectures. Based on the responses so far, some module convenors did not know, others were in the twenty to thirty range and two were in the fifty to fifty-five range (HCAI and Cybercrime). SHT believed that if modules were retained, five hours self-study would be good, three would be too low. SHT believed module convenors should be asked, but an estimate would be good.

Regarding fairness of exams and the external examiner wishing to view in-module exams. A google document has been set up for module convenors to show their exams, a streamlined version of the process for full exams. This will be active for Lent term. SHT expected some pushback from convenors who are used to writing the exam at the last minute, but SHT would push through. Gives a stronger case that the exams have been seen before going to students.

RKH agreed that the policy change makes it clear that in-module exams should be reviewed.

SHT was concerned about the oral exam for mobile robotics. SHT will discuss this with Amanda as she felt this was unfair, at the very least should be recorded and the same questions used. **(Action: SHT)**.

SHT was also concerned about group marking. Had spoken with Eva, group members always receive the same grade and marking is semi-random. SHT did not believe assessing work as a group was good. RKH supported keeping an eye on this and cracking down. RKH believed the time for modules had passed and some people had taken liberties.

- 5.4 (4.4) Point 27, A faculty discussion should take place to decide the appropriate scope of a Part II Project, with respect to working style and technical content. The TMC will discuss this in the near future. **(Action: TMC)**
RKH hesitant to discuss without MK. **(Action: TMC)**

Did not have enough time to cover this today. Asked MK to circulate his document via email **(Action: MK)**.

PJB asked if we had more problems or less compared to previous years. Felt this should be noted. MK explained he had to twist a few arms, but everyone had a supervisor. Two sets of eyes on each. MK explained he had been overloaded and did not have time to check for the dual sign off, could improve next year

PJB was concerned about the loss of a clear sign off. MK did not believe there had ever been an explicit sign off. PJB explained that the proposal had a list of deliverables, and it would be submitted alongside the proposal. As a DoS, PJB believed students did not find this clearly defined. RKH felt that under the new model this should be carried out by the DoS and the supervisor, who may or may not be doing this consistently, but should. PJB felt we should acknowledge that this is the first year. MK felt we were quite explicit regarding the material to hand in.

RKH suggested reviewing this at the end of the year. **(Action: TMC)**. RKH and MK will email all UTOs to flag up acceptable deliverables **(Action: RKH and MK)**.

MK had encountered students who believed the deadline was flexible and changes could be made after the deadline.

- 5.5 (7.1) SBH believed appropriate content for a dissertation would need to be made explicit, some were overinflated and students achieved high marks for little work. MK will draft a document to clarify this **(Action: MK)**
For next meeting as MK not here. **(Action: TMC)**

See 5.4.

- 5.6 (7.4) AVSM was concerned about the number of non-UTO lecturers, Algorithms differing from

syllabus and rumours of Churchill only supervision sheets. RKH wished to hear more.
(Action: AVSM & RKH).

(Action: JV to look at part IA courses, TG to look at part IB, MK to look at part II and report back at next TMC)

MK had looked at part II. Several courses are taught by non-UTOs, the business-related courses, Denotational Semantics and Hoare Logic. RKH explained that was because the alternative was to cancel these courses and students wished to study them. MK and RKH did not think this was a major problem.

Will look at IA and IB next time. **(Action: JV & TG).**

5.7

(7.4) ST suggests calling the question setters 30 min before the exam begins to make them aware that they are “on call” and should have their exam questions to hand. RKH suggests sending a message they have to acknowledge and then calling if they don’t respond within an hour

(Action: ST to write a paragraph/policy for next TMC)

SHT had a policy to text or call everyone on the exams team the previous night. If they responded, examiners could decide how long they would stay in the room. If those people didn’t respond she would stay throughout the entire exam.

RKH wished to see this proposal in written form. SHT sent this.

SHT wondered if all question setters should be required to provide two ways they can be contacted, either a different form of communication (for example phone and whatsapp) or a nearby contact.

RKH thought the proposal was fine. CS wondered if students would be put off by examiners being in the room. RKH did not believe so as this already happens during the first twenty minutes, believed students would be so focused on the exam that they wouldn’t notice the examiner leaving. SHT pointed out that according to regulations, examiners should be in the background unless called upon by the invigilator, rather than walking around as they currently do. SHT wondered if this caused additional stress, RKH believed this went unnoticed by students.

JS liked the document, wished to add a finer point, reminding setters that it is mandatory to be reachable as many were not aware of when their exams take place. RKH thought this was a great point and wished for it to be added to the start. **(Action: SHT).**

RKH wished for the amended draft to be circulated to Wednesday and then circulated again during easter term.

6 Other matters arising

7 General Teaching Matters

7.1 Part II Projects

RKH believed this had been discussed thoroughly. No issues raised.

7.2 IA Bootcamp Feedback [IA Bootcamp feedback.pdf](#)

The feedback was kinder than RKH expected. Mostly positive, but quite a few requests for more work on git, RKH plans to include more of this in the future. A few comments that the data science portion was not particularly useful, RKH was unsure of how to improve this.

RKH will review however believed that the bootcamp added value. Some criticism but a very small percentage.

All agreed that the bootcamp was positive, should be retained for next year and tweaked.

7.3 24/25 examiners reports

IB/II: Awaiting
External: [ee_report_form.doc](#)

Looked at the external examiners report. Largely positive. The system for marking modules was raised, as expected. Issues which had been debated.

Received gratefully. However, we are already acting on this.

7.4 Tripos Review

RKH had circulated a document, a transition plan created following a meeting of heads and deputy heads of departments. A draft and not definitive.

In 2025-26 the goal is to announce to students that the barrier into part III will change, brought down to 2:1s and above.

In 2026-27 move to a three-stream model for IA students, IB will remain unchanged. CST will deliver mathematics independently. Part II modules will be removed, some moved to part III and others will remain in part II but will be reformulated into a normal course. A part II paper ten will be introduced, looking at converting five modules into courses.

In 2027-28 IB will move to a three-stream model. Group project will be moved and exams brought forward.

2028-29 introduce part II compulsory courses. Content pushed out of IB will be taken in by II, while some part II modules will be pushed into III.

MK asked for clarification regarding streams. RKH explained that at any time a student should be taking three courses, currently we teach four at once. This model does require us to teach continuous maths. While most people support the idea in principle, in practice RKH found it difficult to find someone willing to teach this. MK believed it was a chicken and egg situation, not being able to commit to hiring UTOs without committing to the tripos review, while also not being able to commit to the tripos review without additional UTOs. RKH was concerned about the length of time this would take if we delay, potentially into late 2030.

MK suggested contacting the people who would be affected by continuous maths before contacting Wednesday, to find out who would be willing to teach, where priorities lie and so on. RKH will contact relevant people and after discussing will bring to Wednesday (**Action: RKH**).

JS supported lowering the part III entry requirements but wondered about lowering the part III dissertation standards as the current standard may be difficult for 2:1 students to meet. RKH had discussed this, did not have a firm answer but as part III was marked relatively felt this would be fine as it would still be relative. RKH felt the problems with fair marking in part II would inevitably occur in part III. JS pointed out the marking guide was focused on research projects rather than

learning and theoretical, which would be better for some students. MK agreed, the research contribution of a masters would be quite small, so could acknowledge the differences.

MK asked if there would be a problem with places if part III was broadened. RKH did not believe so, there would be more modules and many of them have available spaces.

8 Any Other Business

8.1 UAC Strategic Planning Sub-Committee paper [Towards admissions and recruitment strategy v2.pdf](#), [Recruitment Strategy Cover Paper.pdf](#)

CS explained this would need to be taken to faculty board but wished to have TMC's input. Going to faculty board at the end of January.

CS summarised that this was about the spread of undergraduate admissions among colleges.

TMC will read this, submit comments and create a paper. BS will create a document (**Action: BS**) all will read and comment (**Action: All**).

Date of next meeting: 26 January 2026 2pm