

Minutes

1st MURC Meeting of Trinity Term 2019

Contents

1 Attendance	2
2 Minutes of Previous Meeting	3
3 Statistics Teaching Committee	3
4 Mathematics Teaching Committee	3
4.1 Lecture Capture	3
4.2 Analysis Courses Next Year	4
4.3 Maths and Philosophy	4
4.4 Peer Review	4
4.5 Questionnaire into bias in end of term feedback	4
5 Discussion on allowing OMMS students to become members of MURC	5
6 Part C Networks - Scheduling of Dependent Courses	5
7 Election of College Representatives	6
8 Election of Executive Committee	6
9 Any Other Business	6
9.1 Mistakes in Exam Solutions	6

1 Attendance

Name	Office(s)
Christopher M ^c Garry	Secretary IT Representative Merton College Representative
Michelle Violti	St Catherine's College Representative
Nathaniel Cleland	St Anne's College Representative Mathematics and Computer Science Representative
M. Goh	Mathematics and Statistics Representative Questionnaire Representative Queen's College Representative
Rachel Laing	First Year Representative
Jonathan Wright	
Edward Hart	Corpus Christi College Representative
Sam Neil	
Amrek Bassi	Somerville College Representative
G. Cooper	President Balliol College Representative

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Ratified with no objections

3 Statistics Teaching Committee

Machine Learning and Statistics for Finance, very keen to go ahead next year although the number of teaching staff available has not increased, they are thinking of doing just 2 classes. Most likely they will implement a quota, around 40, though this has not been done before except perhaps for maths education. Priority given to maths and stats students, unless maths can contribute teaching staff. Could be allocated by ballot in September, and students should give an alternative course if they are not successful. This could be unpopular, they say doing this should be a last resort but they are keen to do the course. Based on maths teaching committee, it seems like some sort of restriction is needed unless more tutors/TAs can be recruited. Impression at Maths TC is that they were going to delay. May be dangerous to introduce quotas as the practice may become more widespread. There were not willing to have large classes, also creates excessive workload on TAs. RE hesitant to introduce quota system for maths courses, but there is some discussion of using quotas as an option if class sizes remain an issue.

4 Mathematics Teaching Committee

4.1 Lecture Capture

Lecture capture now has a 90% success rate. Will not be in use in part B or C courses next year as only fitted in L1-3. Are looking at installing lecture capture hardware in other theatres. It will remain optional for the lecturer, they can opt out. This does require a lot of work on the part of lecturers, as the lecturers have to manually edit the videos before they are uploaded. Some also concerned about low attendance. We have one term's data for attendance, no noticeable change in attendance, but not enough data yet. At end of Michaelmas we will have enough data to draw conclusions. Clips will be deleted at the start of every academic year, so recordings from previous years will not be accessible. Students will only be able to see recordings for their year and below, but not from years above, again to prevent students

teaching themselves the content of future courses from the lectures. Department believes that viewing ahead of time encourages students to use lecture captures as a replacement for lectures rather than a supplement. Students can read ahead from textbooks and lecture notes etc.. Some lecturers would prefer lectures to not be released until after the courses, for revision. Opposition to these proposed restrictions from some members, why not give as freely as lecture notes? Has seemed to replace lectures for a few people in existing courses.

4.2 Analysis Courses Next Year

B4.3 Distribution Theory will be split into two courses next year. There will not be a Hyperbolic Equations course due to low take-up. There will not be any new Part C analysis courses, and instead wait until the cohort from the split B4.3 has come through.

4.3 Maths and Philosophy

This will be the 50th year of MathPhil as an undergraduate course at Oxford. Events will likely take place over the long vacation, but if people are considering organising events for undergraduate at the start of Michaelmas we could suggest this to JCCU.

4.4 Peer Review

Not fully decided, Maths Teaching Committee is considering introducing a voluntary peer review system for lectures. They expect that people lecturing Prelims or Part A courses be peer reviewed. Lecturers can volunteer to be reviewers. In the worst case, RE/VN will be available as reviewers although they are keen to create a culture where this is seen as normal. System will be optional, but department would prefer new Prelims and Part A lecturers to be reviewed. Suggested that lecturers be reviewed around every 5 years.

4.5 Questionnaire into bias in end of term feedback

One of MTC members raised concerns that the current system of end of term feedback could be reflecting implicit bias in students, favourite lecturers, etc. One Prelims lecturer said that in his feedback, students weren't seeing him as

their favourite lecturer so were being harsher in reviews due to their preference for another lecturer. No members of MURC consciously aware of doing this. Possible remedy would be to use a 1 to 10 scale to nuance effects of this subconscious bias. Favourite lecturers are likely to be good, so this effect may not be causing bias. Could we ask for justification for scores? Most students currently do not write comments. Not much use of low scores, possibly due to people not attending lectures they dislike, and general optimism bias. Bad feedback may lead to discussions with departmental staff, we do not believe there is any formal consequence for this however. Bias corresponding to gender/ethnicity has not been raised, there are other committees, e.g. SWAN, that would be better able to deal with this. Generally agreed that current system is fine.

5 Discussion on allowing OMMS students to become members of MURC

President proposes opening membership of MURC to OMMS students, but only allowed to run for Fourth Year Rep, and not college reps. Currently the Constitution does not mention OMMS students so they are not welcome in MURC. Current members include everyone reading for an undergraduate degree in maths & joint schools, visiting students affiliated to the Maths Department, does not include OMMS. We should try to include them as our activity often affects them. We are not sure if MMathPhys students doing a fourth year in maths, both groups are classified as postgraduates, but should be admitted to MURC for similar reasons. Would prefer college reps to be in undergraduate communities in college, President thinks it would be best to have undergraduate college reps.

6 Part C Networks - Scheduling of Dependent Courses

One of third years wanted to note that C6.5 and C5.10 are taught in Hilary, require C5.4 as a suggested prerequisite which is also taught in Hilary. Not sure whether this has been taken into account, whether students are expected to know C5.4 before the start, or whether prerequisites will be learned early

enough in C5.4 relative to the other courses that taking them simultaneously is sufficient. C8.5 also has this issue. These things happen in part A with DEs 2 and Integral Transforms, where doing them simultaneously is sufficient.

7 Election of College Representatives

Samuel, Trinity College, elected nemine contradicente

8 Election of Executive Committee

9 Any Other Business

9.1 Mistakes in Exam Solutions

Is there any way of verifying that the model solutions provided by lecturers for exam papers are correct? In a Statistical Machine Learning class this week, there were two mistakes in the solutions when they were being worked through. We are concerned that incorrect solutions are being used in the marking process. We are not sure what safeguards are in place in courses where the lecturer is the examiner. We will raise this concern at next JCCU. This could happen for any part B or C course, which would be unfair.