To: Mathematics Part B and Part C Intercollegiate Class Tutors

Re: Organisation of Intercollegiate Classes

Intercollegiate classes are organised by the Mathematical Institute on behalf of colleges to support Part B and Part C lecture courses. For each lecture course students attend four 90-minute classes. Other arrangements of the six hours of teaching (e.g. six 1-hour classes) are possible at the discretion of the lecturer and should then apply to all sets of classes for that course. For sets of four 90-minute classes, the classes are held fortnightly taking place in either:

- **“even” weeks**: 2\(^{\text{nd}}\), 4\(^{\text{th}}\), 6\(^{\text{th}}\), and 8\(^{\text{th}}\) weeks or 4\(^{\text{th}}\), 6\(^{\text{th}}\) and 8\(^{\text{th}}\) and 1\(^{\text{st}}\) week of the following term.
- **“odd” weeks**: 3\(^{\text{rd}}\), 5\(^{\text{th}}\), 7\(^{\text{th}}\) and 1\(^{\text{st}}\) week of the following term.

As a class tutor you are responsible for:

- finding a TA for the class (the list DPhil students who have volunteered to be a TA can be found at [http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/teaching-staff/teaching-assistants](http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/teaching-staff/teaching-assistants);
- liaising with the course lecturer and TA to agree a time for the class, and booking a classroom;
- updating as necessary the list of students attending the class;
- planning and giving each class in collaboration with the TA;
- ensuring your TA enters marks and attendance records into MINERVA promptly after each class;
- alerting a student’s college if you have any urgent concerns during the term;
- entering student reports at the end of term;
- mentoring your TA and entering your TA’s training report (if applicable).

### Important Dates

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8(^{\text{th}}) September</td>
<td>DEADLINE, 12pm: Tutors and TAs for all classes must be confirmed and academic administration informed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6(^{\text{th}}) October (Mon Week 0)</td>
<td>DEADLINE, 12pm: Class tutors should have provided the course lecturer with the details of their class (tutor, TA, time, place, weeks held, work hand time).</td>
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<td>8(^{\text{th}}) October (Wed Week 0)</td>
<td>DEADLINE, 12pm: Lecturers should have entered details for all classes for their course onto MINERVA.</td>
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<td>9(^{\text{th}}) October (Thurs Week 0)</td>
<td>Student registration for classes opens at 12pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13(^{\text{th}}) October (Mon Week 1)</td>
<td>Student registration closes at 12pm.</td>
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<td>15(^{\text{th}}) October (Wed Week 1)</td>
<td>Class lists will have been entered into MINERVA. Lecturers/tutors will be notified.</td>
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<td>16(^{\text{th}})-19(^{\text{th}}) October (Week 1)</td>
<td>MINERVA locked by Academic Admin to allow class lists to be updated.</td>
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**20th October (Week 2)**  
MINERVA unlocked for lecturers/tutors to keep up-to-date and make any necessary changes to class membership lists (*please note to cc Jessica Sheard to any emails about changes to registration*).

**3rd November (Mon Week 4)**  
DEADLINE, 12pm: MINERVA freezes, no further changes will be permitted to class membership so that fees can be calculated and charged to each college. Any late requests must be forwarded to Academic Admin (acadadmin@maths.ox.ac.uk).

**1st December (Mon week 8)**  
DEADLINE, 9am: All end-of-term reports need to be completed.

### Database
The class scheme is administered via the MINERVA web-based database. Full guidelines can be found online ([https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/teaching-staff/class-scheme](https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/teaching-staff/class-scheme)). If you do not have (or have forgotten) a username/password for Minerva then please notify Jessica Sheard (sheard@maths.ox.ac.uk) as soon as possible.

### Timetabling Classes
When timetabling the classes, please consult the lecture list found at [http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/notices/lecture-lists/](http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/notices/lecture-lists/) to avoid, whenever possible, clashes with lectures that students taking your option may be attending. Those wishing to book a room in the Mathematical Institute can view current availability at [https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/app/room-booking](https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/app/room-booking). When choosing a room it would be appreciated if you could co-ordinate your booking with existing bookings to avoid, as far as possible, unusable gaps between bookings. Please send all room booking requests to room-booking@maths.ox.ac.uk or use the online room booking system. Please remember to always include the course code/title, tutor’s and TA’s name when booking a room.

**Note:** Class tutors are strongly encouraged to use college rooms for the teaching of intercollegiate classes

### Pre-Term Meeting
The lecturer should call a pre-term meeting of the teaching team (lecturer, class tutors and TAs) to discuss such matters as the notation, the route through the material etc. It is helpful if there is liaison between the lecturer and class tutors and TAs throughout the term, with the lecturer keeping the team up to date with progress in lectures and tutors informing the lecturer of any difficulties with the problem sheets or students understanding of lectures.

### MFoCS Students
As a partially taught graduate course (not a pure research course), MFoCS students are eligible to attend classes and have their work marked. Where sufficient numbers exist, MFoCS students will be allocated to a separate class. *Other graduate students wishing to attend classes as observers only (not having work marked) must first seek permission of the class tutor.*

### Pre-Class Meeting
There should be a pre-class meeting of about 15 minutes to discuss with your TA how the students have done and to plan the class. Additionally, class tutors may ask their TA to inform them of their students’ performance via email.

### The Class
- The class tutor and TA should decide together how the TA should contribute to the class: s/he might demonstrate one or more of the problems or help by encouraging
students to participate in the class and pointing out particular problem areas. However, a TA who is in training (see below) should present some problems each week. At some stage during the class, students should have an opportunity to ask the class tutor and TA about remarks on their work, and for general help/concern with studying the course. Students may also be encouraged to demonstrate solutions, when appropriate. Tutors are responsible for ensuring this happens.

- Records of both marks and attendance should be entered into Minerva promptly after each class by the TA to allow college tutors to track the progress of their students. It is the responsibility of the tutor to make sure this happens.

**Problem Sheets and Model Solutions**
It is the responsibility of the course lecturer to provide problem sheets and complete model solutions to class tutors and TAs. Class tutors should not need to devote a great deal of time working out solutions to problems.

**Marking**

- Work is marked by the TA before the class, although class tutors may find it helpful to mark one or two scripts. The class tutor is responsible for monitoring the overall standard of marking.
- TAs are given the following advice about marking:
  - “Research shows that students benefit most from feedback on their work, rather than grading. So you should also write comments on the work; for instance explaining where the student has gone wrong, how it could have been done better, how the presentation could be improved, or indeed that an argument is particularly elegant or inventive. Try to be reasonably positive and encouraging.
  - Please also give each question a grade and also give an overall grade for the piece of work and keep a record of the grades. You should give either a numerical mark or a quality mark for each question. These translate roughly as follows. If a question is marked out of 25, then 19-25 is an alpha, 12-18 is a beta and 6-11 is a gamma with additional pluses or minuses to indicate where in the range the mark falls. An overall grade might be assigned as follows:
    1. **Alpha:** A student has answered most questions with an alpha score (possibly one or two betas); has demonstrated a very good grasp of the topic, with possibly a few minor errors. Overall shows flare.
    2. **Beta:** A student has mostly scored beta for each question (with, possibly, one or two alphas or gammas). Has answered the questions well and has demonstrated a sound knowledge of the topics.
    **Gamma:** Poor work. Mostly gamma scores, a few betas or alphas. Lacks understanding. Short on details or precision.”

**Absence from classes, unsatisfactory work, failure to hand in work**
Colleges automatically receive reports on their students at set points during the term (week 4 and week 8). However, in addition to those reports, if there are serious concerns at any time, for example, if a student:
- presents unsatisfactory work, or
- fails to hand in work,
without a reasonable excuse, the class tutor **must** inform the student’s college. This can be done by e-mail to tutors-<insert college name>@maths.ox.ac.uk.

**Reports**
The class tutor is responsible for reports which must be completed and entered into MINERVA for each student, giving grades, attendance throughout the term and overall comments by **9am Monday week 8 (please note these will be emailed colleges on this date)**. If the final class occurs after Monday week 8, the marks and attendance for that class should be added later.
Training for TAs

It is University policy that graduate research students undertake some preparation for academic practice alongside their research training, and for this reason the department expects graduate students to do a limited amount of work as a TA. As a class tutor you are asked to act as mentor to your TA, who could be thought of as an apprentice. So:

• Your TA should attend every class.
• You should arrange for your TA to present solutions to some problems each week and you should assist by making helpful constructive comments during or after the presentations.
• If your TA is undergoing training you will be required to submit a report on your TA commenting on their marking and presentation of solutions, providing constructive feedback and indicating whether further training is necessary. You will be alerted by MINERVA if this is required of you.

Senior Tutors’ Rules

Special arrangements have been made with the Senior Tutors’ Committee for this class scheme and the operation of the scheme continues to be under scrutiny. It is therefore important that class tutors pay attention to the following points:

• Each class should have both a tutor and a teaching assistant; that is, two different people should be involved in running each class, and both should be present during the class.
• Class sizes should be between 5 and 12 undergraduates, with a preferred size of 8. Larger classes may be permitted in exceptional circumstances but the Academic Assistant will alert colleges and give them the option of withdrawing their students from such classes.
• Classes of fewer than 5 students are not financially viable and cannot run within the class scheme. For such cases, the class tutor should make arrangements for their class to be put onto OXCORT (http://www.oxcort.ox.ac.uk/) as a tutorial.

Contacts

Dr Janet Dyson, Faculty Teaching Advisor (janet.dyson@mansfield.ox.ac.uk)
Dr Richard Earl, Director of Undergraduate Studies (earl@maths.ox.ac.uk)
Jessica Sheard, Academic Assistant (jessica.sheard@maths.ox.ac.uk)