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. It is also possible to arrange this instead as six 1-hour classes, at the discretion of the lecturer. For sets of four 90-minute classes, the classes are held fortnightly taking place in either:

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

As a class tutor you are responsible for:
- finding a TA for the class (a list of DPhil students who have been allocated to the lecture course will be made available);
- 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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>14(^{th}) August</td>
<td>All tutor and TA application forms are to be returned. This information will be processed and forwarded to the lecturer for confirmation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late August</td>
<td>Allocation of tutors confirmed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday week -1</strong></td>
<td><strong>DEADLINE, 12pm:</strong> Class tutors should have provided the course lecturer with the details of their class (tutor, TA, time, place, weeks held, work hand in time).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday week 0</strong></td>
<td><strong>DEADLINE, 12pm:</strong> Lecturers should have entered details for all classes for their course onto MINERVA.</td>
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<td>Thursday week 0</td>
<td>Student registration for classes opens at 12pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday week 1</strong></td>
<td>Student registration closes at 12pm.</td>
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<td>Wednesday week 1</td>
<td>Class lists entered into MINERVA. Lecturers/tutors will be notified. <em>Minerva will be locked for the rest of week 1 to allow Academic Admin to update class lists.</em></td>
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<td><strong>Monday week 2</strong></td>
<td>MINERVA unlocked for lecturers/tutors to keep up-to-date and make any necessary changes to class membership lists (<em>please note to cc <a href="mailto:acadadmin@maths.ox.ac.uk">acadadmin@maths.ox.ac.uk</a> to any emails about changes to registration.</em>).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday week 4</td>
<td>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 <a href="mailto:acadadmin@maths.ox.ac.uk">acadadmin@maths.ox.ac.uk</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday week 8</td>
<td>DEADLINE, 9am: All end-of-term reports need to be completed on MINERVA and sent to Colleges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday week 8</td>
<td>DEADLINE, 5pm: All lecture and class questionnaires returned to Academic Admin, S0.16</td>
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**Database**

The class scheme is administered via the MINERVA web-based database. Full guidelines can be found online (https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/teaching-staff/class-scheme). If you do not have (or have forgotten) a username/password for Minerva then please email acadadmin@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/members/students/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/members/room-booking/room-booking-calendar. 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**

Ideally the lecturer should call a pre-term meeting for the teaching team (lecturer, class tutors and TAs) to discuss such matters as the notation, the route through the material etc. This is especially helpful if some of the class tutors are new to the course. Tutors are encouraged to liaise with the lecturer throughout the term, drawing on feedback from their TAs. It can be very helpful for a tutor to inform the lecturer of any difficulties with the problem sheets or students' understanding of lectures, and the lecturer might want to keep you updated on progress in lectures.

**MfOCS/MMathPhys Students**

As partially taught graduate courses, MfOCS and MMathPhys students are eligible to attend classes and have their work marked. Where numbers are sufficient, MfOCS/MMathPhys students will be allocated to a separate class. **Other graduate students wishing to attend classes as observers only must first seek permission of the class tutor. Note that TAs must not be required to mark work for graduate students who are solely sitting in on classes. Nor should they be asked to mark any supplementary material set specifically for Masters students, and this material should only be covered in class if there is time.**

**Pre-Class Meeting**

It is important that there should be a pre-class meeting of about 10-15 minutes to discuss with your TA how the students have done and to plan the class. This especially helps ensure the best use of time and that the class addresses the educational needs of as many of the students as possible. It is important to decide, once the students’ performance is known,
which topics and problems (or parts of problems) should be prioritised in the class, and the order in which you might want to discuss them (there is no need to go through the sheet in order). Additionally, class tutors may ask their TA to inform them of their students’ performance via email.

**The Class**

- At some point the class tutor and TA should decide together how the TA contributes to the class. TAs should demonstrate at least one problem in each class, and they should have some choice about which problem this will be and sufficient notice to prepare their presentation. The TA can also help by, for example, encouraging students to participate in the class and pointing out particular problem areas. At some stage during the class, students should have an opportunity to ask the class tutor and TA about remarks on their work, and about general queries. Students may also be encouraged to demonstrate solutions, when appropriate, but they should have some choice about this.
- The class should be more than a problems class. To be worthwhile a class should also give context and purpose to the problem sheet. Student feedback is consistently received to this effect. Furthermore with pre-class planning (as above) it should not be necessary to cover every problem or part of a problem.
- 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. Please do prompt the lecturer if model solutions are not provided in a reasonably timely way (or at all), and contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies or the Faculty Teaching Advisor if this becomes a problem.

**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 write brief 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 were marked out of 25, then 19-25 would be an alpha, 12-18 a beta and 6-11 a gamma with additional pluses or minuses to indicate where in the range the mark falls. An overall grade might be assigned as follows:
  - **Alpha:** A student has answered most questions with an alpha score (possibly with one or two betas); has demonstrated a very good grasp of the topic, with possibly a few minor errors. Overall shows flare.
  - **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:** The work is poor, with mostly gamma scores (maybe with a few betas or
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 writing reports, with input from the TA. These must be completed and entered into MINERVA by the end of week 7 (please note these will be emailed to Colleges first thing on Monday week 8). 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 Vicky Neale, Faculty Teaching Advisor (vicky.neale@maths.ox.ac.uk)
Dr Richard Earl, Director of Undergraduate Studies (earl@maths.ox.ac.uk)
Academic Administration, acadadmin@maths.ox.ac.uk

alphas). It is short on details or precision. The student appears to lack understanding. There is also more detailed advice, please see the TA job description https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/teaching-staff/class-scheme.