



To: Mathematics Part B and Part C Intercollegiate Class Tutors

Re: Organisation of Intercollegiate Classes

Dear Class Tutor,

For each Part B course you should give four 90-minute classes. For each Part C course you should give seven 1-hour classes. Please note the following important points:

Database

The class scheme will continue to be administered via the *MINERVA* web-based database. Please read the full guidelines attached. If you do not have a username and a password for *MINERVA*, please notify Sandy Patel (patels@maths.ox.ac.uk) as soon as possible.

Teaching Assistants

Class tutors are responsible for finding their own teaching assistant. The list of volunteers can be found at the beginning of the term at <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/teaching-staff/teaching-assistants>. **Please note that for any given class, the class tutor and teaching assistant should not be the same person.**

Problem Sheets and Model Solutions

It is the responsibility of the course lecturer to provide problem sheets and complete and thorough model solutions. Class tutors should not need to devote a great deal of time working out solutions to problems.

Pre-Term Meeting

The lecturer should call a pre-term meeting of the teaching team (lecturer, class tutors and teaching assistants) to discuss such matters as the notation, the route through the material etc. It is helpful if there is liaison between the lecturer and their team of 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.

Allocation of Students to Classes

- Class tutors should inform the course lecturer of the following details before **the end of week 0**:
 - Name of TA,
 - Time and venue of classes,
 - Time and place for students to submit work.

This allows lecturers to allocate students to classes immediately after the first lecture and



then to enter all this information into *MINERVA*.

When timetabling the classes, please consult the lecture list found at

<http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/notices/lecture-lists/>

to avoid, whenever possible, clashes with lectures on other options that students taking your option maybe attending.

(Note: Class tutors are strongly encouraged to use college rooms for the teaching of *intercollegiate* classes. If this is not possible, rooms at the Mathematical Institute may be requested by emailing room-bookings@maths.ox.ac.uk, though these requests will not be considered before week -1.)

- Class tutors should ensure that the names of students stored in *MINERVA* are kept up to date. **At the end of week 4, no further changes will be permitted in class membership** to allow *MINERVA* to calculate fees to each college. If a student wants to stop attending a class for which they are registered, **both the class tutor and Sandy Patel need to be notified before the end of week 4.**
- These classes are not intended for graduate research students. Graduate students wishing to attend classes as observers only (not having work marked) must first seek permission of the class tutor.

MFoCS Students

MFoCS students are eligible to attend classes and have their work marked, as this course is a partially taught graduate course (and not a pure research course). Where sufficient numbers exist, MFoCS students should be allocated to a separate class.

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 standard of marking and writing the final reports.
- TAs are given the following advice about marking:

“Please 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 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. You should also write comments on the work; research shows that this is more useful feedback to students than grades. 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.”

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 by email.

The Class

- TAs are expected to attend each 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. 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 concerned with studying the course. Students may also be encouraged to demonstrate solutions, when appropriate.
- Records of both marks and attendance should be entered into Minerva promptly after each class to allow college tutors to track the progress of their students.

Absence from classes, unsatisfactory work, failure to hand in work

The *MINERVA* database allows colleges to check the reports on their students at any time during the term. However, if there are serious concerns, for example:

- a student is absent from a class,
- presents unsatisfactory work,
- 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**. If the final class occurs after Monday week 8, the marks and attendance for that class should be added later.

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 10 undergraduates, with a preferred size of 8. It may occasionally be necessary for classes to be as large as 12. Larger classes may be permitted in exceptional circumstances but the Academic Assistant needs to be notified because colleges must be alerted and given 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 teaching arrangements outside the class scheme with the colleges concerned. *Where a class starts running within the class scheme but then becomes too small, it is the responsibility of the class tutor to arrange payment for him/herself and the teaching assistant with the colleges of students who are members of the class at the end of Week 4.*

If you anticipate having insufficient or excessive numbers or no TA, please contact Sandy Patel (patels@maths.ox.ac.uk) urgently for guidance.

- For Part B courses the assumption is that there should be a set of four 90-minute classes taking place either in
 - 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th weeks (“even” weeks) or
 - 3rd, 5th, 7th and 1st week of the following term (“odd” weeks)
 - Or 4th, 6th and 8th and 1st week of the following term.
- For Part C courses the assumption is that there should be a set of seven 1-hour classes, one in each of the weeks 2-8.
- The classes are intercollegiate and each class tutor is undertaking a tutorial responsibility at the request of the undergraduate's College. (It should be noted that Faculty on a UL type contract may also be taking a class as part of their departmental stint.)

Training for Teaching Assistants

- You will be required to submit a report, including constructive comments of the TA's marking and delivery. You will be alerted to this by *MINERVA*.
- 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.
- By the end of week 8 you should complete the report on your TA in *MINERVA*, commenting on their marking and presentation of solutions, and giving constructive feedback. The report should also indicate whether or not your TA needs further training.

If your classes are likely to deviate from the standard arrangements described above, please contact me c/o Sandy Patel (patels@maths.ox.ac.uk) as soon as possible.

With thanks,

Dr Glenys Luke

Acting Chair of Teaching Committee

c/o Sandy Patel, Academic Assistant