

JCCU Meeting Friday 27th October 2006, 2.15pm Higman room, Maths Institute

Present: Dr Audrey Curnock (Mathematics Teaching Committee, Maths and Philosophy Joint Committee rep), Prof Richard Bird (Computing Laboratory), Dr Matthias Winkel (Statistics Department), Shelly Clarke (MPLS) James Holwell (Exeter, MURC chairperson), Hannah Clapham (Hertford, MURC secretary), Helene Neufeld (4th year rep, St Hilda's), Ruth Everatt (Christ Church), Helen Beggs (Merton), Linus Mattauch (Maths and Philosophy Rep, St Hugh's)

Apologies from: Dr B Stewart (Mathematics Undergraduate Teaching Advisor), James Dean (Brasenose)

Minutes (Unconfirmed)

Audrey Curnock commented that she had enjoyed her first weeks in Oxford.

1. Meeting held on 12 May 2006

- (i) No comments were made on the minutes from the last meeting.
- (ii) 4/6 classes needs to be reviewed again, maybe after this term. Any comments are welcomed.
- (iii) Dr Curnock asked if the odd even allocation was useful. Many people found it was. Any comments about this are welcome and will help future planning.

2. Membership of JCCU

- (i) At present Dr Curnock is being the Maths and Philosophy representative.
- (ii) It was noted that junior members will let Catherine Goodwin know of any changes, and that Hannah Clapham was omitted from the list of members.

3. Examiners Reports

All the exam reports attached were commented on.

(i) Moderations:

- a) Prof Richard Bird wondered about the lack of Maths and Computer Science reports and said he'd follow it up, and send them to Catherine Goodwin, if that had not already been done.
- b) Dr Audrey Curnock commented that now a candidate must pass at least two Mods papers to be eligible for prelims.
- c) Full reports are on the web

(ii) Part A:

- a) It was commented that the system used to hand in papers in the exam works.
- b) Currently the Proctors ruling says that a medical note may only be used in the year it is issued. This is a problem for maths, as the classification is not always given at the end of that year. There is to be consultation with the Education Policy and Standards Committee (EPSC). It was noted that something definitely needs to be done about this.
- c) The reports called for the weak paper rule, rounding up procedure, and description of classification to be reviewed. This will be done. The current weak

- paper rule is in line with QAA bench mark, which says 'blemishes' should be allowed. The report also wondered if it was time to introduce profiling.
- d) It was clarified that re- calibration in Part A is done per paper, not per question, and that examiners do try to make sure that all questions are of a similar standard. re- calibration is used as is necessary and is kept to a minimum. There is talk that markers should suggest class boundaries for the raw marks.
 - e) It was also clarified that when the same paper is sat by people from different departments, the USMs and the method used to arrive at these USMs are given to the other departments and then not changed.

(iii) Finals

a) Part B

- (i) There was a problem with calculators in the exams sat by Physics candidates. It will be going to the Division. The Maths Institute believes that papers set by them, should be sat under their rules, so no calculators in general are permitted.
- (ii) It was also commented that some Maths students did not know that they could use calculators in exams set by the Stats department.
- (iii) Much debate followed as to the best way to inform students of the situation about calculators. An email was suggested, as was putting a note in the course handbook that you will need to find out before your exam, a web page with a list of which papers you can use calculators in, and when released, the list of types of calculators you can use. Also lecturers could tell students in the lectures.

b) Part C:

- (i) The exam dates were released late. Shelly Clarke said that the Division took it up with exam schools, and it was due to staff shortages. But they still didn't get the dates up in time. Dr Curnock has a meeting with the exam schools and hopefully there will be no delay for year. The Division will also help in ensuring it does not happen again.

It was then noted that, the Proctors may be changing the Mods and Part A exams to each one a day, week 9, Mon- Thurs.

- (i) This was met with a mixed response. Part A exams that have been on the same day previously are on the same thing, so maybe this wouldn't help.
- (ii) Don't know when the Proctors will decide on this, but 1st years were warned at induction that this may happen.

(iii) External examiners reports

a) Part A

- (i) The reports said that the number of marks between 60-69 needs to be looked at. The papers AC2 and AO2 were higher on average. Maybe the levels were not quite right and this will also be looked at.

b) Part B

- (i) The external examiner suggests a period of stability with changes to the database this year.

c) Part C

- (i) Excellent stuff was said. A look at the 13-19 and 20-25 mark distribution was suggested.
- (ii) For Maths and Philosophy, the rules for a 1^{sts} are open to ambiguity and need to be looked at.
- (iii) In Maths and Stats there was a mistake found in the marking. The checks are rigorous, but additional steps are to be taken. Those checking will be briefed by the Chair of examiners, who will be in the room while the checking is being done. The checkers will also be given mark schemes.

4. Reports from the meetings of the Faculty/Teaching /Academic Committees:

- (i) Mathematics reported that they are harmonizing the course synopses.
- (ii) Computer Science have not met yet. If they have anything pressing they wish MURC to discuss, maybe they could give the minutes of their meeting to MURC.
- (iii) Stats had nothing to report.

5. Questionnaires

- (i) James and Dr Curnock met to discuss these. Any points raised were passed on to the relevant lecturers. It was reported that, as usual, students wanted more worked examples.
- (ii) Dr Curnock stated that she wished to discuss the Oxford Student Course Evaluation Questionnaire (OSCEQ) report at the next meeting. This is a report on the questionnaires completed by students when they leave.

6. Open days

- (i) There are no more this calendar year.
- (ii) This is probably the last year the admissions test will be held in Oxford. It will then be done in schools around the country. The provision for overseas candidates needs to be looked at.

7. Lecture list for Hilary Term 2007

These will be on the website.

8. Matters raised by junior members

James wished to thank Yan Chee Yu, Catherine Goodwin and Waldemar Schlackow for their emails with the odd/even week suggestions. Most people found them very useful.

9. AOB

- (i) Dr Lackenby has received a grant for graduate lectures to support graduate research students. These are in conjunction with Bath, Warwick, Bristol and Imperial.
- (ii) Statistics got a grant for a similar set up with 8 other universities.
- (iii) Fundraising is going on for new buildings. There was a question about a café in the building, and it was said that suggestions should be emailed to Keith Gillow. It was hoped that there would be a student consultation when the plans are ready.

- (iv) The interview reforms previously discussed in these meetings will not be voted on until Nov 13th.
- (v) Biology is now in the same division as Maths, the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division (MPLS).
- (vi) There are new security measures coming in to the Maths Institute, swipe card entry and video cameras.

HC 29/10/06