

JCCU Meeting Friday 26th October 2007, 2.15 pm Higman room, Maths
Institute

Present: Dr Audrey Curnock (Mathematics Teaching Committee, Maths and Philosophy Joint Committee rep) Dr Matthias Winkel (Senior member representing Statistics), Yan-Chee Yu (Deputy Academic Administrator), Rosalind Freeman (Hertford, MURC president), Linus Mattauch (St Hugh's, Maths and Philosophy Rep)

Apologies from: Dr J Ouakine (Senior member representing Computing), Shelley Harper (MPLS), Dr Richard Earl (Schools Liaison Officer), Maria Molokova (LMH, MURC Secretary), James Holwell (Exeter), Graham O'Connor (Trinity, Questionnaire Rep) Anne-Marie Imafidon (Keble, Maths and Computer Science Rep),

Minutes (Unconfirmed)

1. Meeting held on 11 May 2007:

- i) Minutes from the last meeting were held as a true representation of the meeting.
- ii) Matters arising:
 - Rubric change in Part B for 2009

2. Membership of JCCU

- i) There have been no changes
- ii) It was agreed that when the Junior Members change due to the hand-over to the next year's committee that an email would be sent to Yan-Chee Yu

3. Examinations 2007, discussion of the examiners reports, these key points were raised with regard to them:

- i) Handing in examination scripts has caused some problems this year and there is to be discussion with the examination schools on this.
- ii) It was noted that dyslexic students should have a note with every exam script bundle which did not happen this year.
- iii) It was mentioned that the Mathematics and Statistics reports for Part B had not been received and an explanation of this was given. A Proctorial decision is awaited.
- iv) There was discussion on degree classification and following publication of the examiner's reports the teaching committee will consider various issues raised in reports.. It was noted that there would not be scaling by question. Students raised an issue on how the classification worked and the competitive nature of this. It was explain that much work has been done on this, they considered a maths profile and took into account what other top universities do. Also, there is a special effort made to consider border line cases. Scaling is to ensure there is sufficient difference between 1st and 2nd class students and the papers are of the same level. It was also noted that the percentages that were likely to be awarded would be largely based on previous years data.
- v) A student raised an issue about Mathematics and Philosophy. These comments are attached at the bottom, as it was requested that some more information was given. This would be passed to the JCMP.

4. Reports from meeting of Faculty/Teaching/Academic Committees

- i) Lecture registration – it was noted that more had to be done on this as students sign up for lectures but attend others as well and this makes timetabling very difficult. A solution was proposed and it was decided that students would be asked to indicate how many lectures they were thinking of taking in HT 2008 with seems the best idea for the moment. Choosing options on line was also suggested although this may not help as there is not the timetabling software to make this of much use. We discussed how class tutors/lecturers organised timetabling of classes and this seemed quite difficult for large courses. It would be good if an electronic system could be devised to help lecturers.
- ii) A working party is to be set up for project work. This is to help with skills in the future and help with research. It was noted that the 4 year students may be more open to this but some current students would object if it were compulsory. It would help to broaden the skills obtained during the degree. It would have to be well publicised.
- iii) MURC requires a new questionnaire representative.
- iv) Thanks was given to Students help at Open Days and the induction day. It was noted that this year there will be two more open days on 26th April and 3rd May.
- v) For the new website some of the old links may not work but it is all mainly working and the department is looking into this.

Notes from Maths and Philosophy representative.

Currently Maths&Philosophy students take the equivalent of 2 papers in Part A and 6 papers in Part B. The number of papers taken within a short period of time has a significant influence on students performance. At present, MP students marks are scaled with those of the Maths group. This means that we are given an advantage in the second year, but are disadvantaged in the third. We believe this to be a problem, as the third year counts 82 percent towards Part A/B classification. (The point is not that the second year does not count much and there is so much weight on the third year, which is fine in itself, but rather that we believe this is unfair when `competing` against others with different numbers of papers.) Moreover, some are not happy with the way B1 foundations is taught and examined. Due to the substantial overlap with contents of the Mods philosophical logic (even if the presentation is of course very different!), some feel they study the same logic for three years. As the 2007 report is not yet available, I wish to highlight passages of the 2005 report I found, see (*).

To examine B1 in the second year would make the second year too difficult for weaker students and reduce the possibility of studying several of the mathematics part A options, which are rather important for later years. It would also give the second year too much emphasis on maths and the third year too much on philosophy. However, it also seems impossible to introduce us to B1 only in the third year. A good grasp of this module is needed to study Philosophy of Mathematics in TT of the second year or MT of the third year. Furthermore, it does not seem feasible to scale the MP cohorts marks separately in both years.

Another request of a student who had a great interest in logic was to open some of the fourth year logic options to third years. Alternatively one could advertise more strongly the logic options offered by Comlab which we are allowed to take, although another student, who took them this year, was disappointed with them.

(*): The examiners were aware that Mathematics & Philosophy candidates were no longer debarred from answering the first logic question on Paper B1. Since this is normally on material which is in the syllabus for Honour Moderations in Mathematics & Philosophy, this might be expected to give those candidates an advantage over Mathematics candidates. In the event, the question was answered by few Mathematics & Philosophy candidates and their marks were not particularly high. Mathematics & Philosophy, candidates, by contrast, performed with only a few exceptions conspicuously poorly (and I gather that they did not redeem themselves on the Logic half of the paper). It is worth quoting the comment I wrote in my report on b1 Set Theory in 2004: It was striking, and disappointing, that the Maths/Phil candidates performed significantly less well in general than the mathematicians.

Dr Curnock will notify the students of any action taken.

RF/Y-CY/AGC 13/11/07