

FACULTIES OF MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH UNDERGRADUATES

A meeting of this committee was held on Friday 12 May at 12:30pm, N4.01 Mathematical Institute.

Present: Dmitry Belyaev, Rei Ota, Neil Laws, Jan Kristensen, Charlotte Turner-Smith, Dan Ciubotaru, Phillip Wiedemann, Maria Matthis, Yuxin Wang, Yifu Zhang, James Munro, Mario Marcos Losada, Ahmed Hasib, Georgi Filipov, Ishwar Karthik

In attendance: Imogen Harbinson-Frith

1. Apologies

No apologies

This was first JCCU meeting since the extremely sad news that Dr Vicky Neale passed away. The committee reflected on Vicky's huge contribution within the department, to JCCU, and the particular importance she placed on student consultation and recorded its gratitude to Vicky for her dedicated work on JCCU.

2. Meeting held on Friday 23th February 2023

(a) Minutes (attached JCCU-23-05-23)

ACTION: Attach appeal information to department website.

(b) Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda.

ACTION: It was noted that the committee would like to introduce an Action Grid similar to Teaching Committees into JCCU to aid in completing any actions discussed during the meeting.

3. Reports from working groups

(a) Intercollegiate classes

It was noted that the current intercollegiate classes proposal includes reducing marking at part C and instead release solutions to some problem sheets. Students noted concern about this proposal, with an informal survey showing that many students would like part C problem sheet marking to remain in place.

The committee understood students concerns about the reduction of marking. It was noted that the department will need to communicate this change to students --- including the rationale that part C / OMMS is a masters level course, so students should independent learners as compared with earlier years. It was noted that it would be important that model solutions for unmarked problems were written for students, not tutors.

ACTION: Pass on student concerns to Teaching Committee (SW).

ACTION: Communicate change in marking arrangements to part C students as part of their induction materials.

(b) Dissertation working group

The committee discussed the working group proposals. The aspects of increasing supervision time, bringing forward the dissertation start time, were welcomed by students.

The committee discussed the working Group proposal that smaller part C classes be turned into dissertations. Students raised the concern that this proposal could limit student learning as currently it is only possible to do one dissertation.

4. Plans for future teaching arrangements

(a) 2023-24. Discussions on teaching arrangements for 2023-24 were rolled into items (a) and (b).

(b) 2024-25. This item was omitted due to time constraints.

5. MURC business

Item (a) was taken under items 3.

(b) Plans for increasing student feedback

MURC raised concerns about the effectiveness of current feedback systems and the lack of student feedback, which the department members on the committee agreed with and agreed to report back to teaching committee. It was noted that if the department returned to a paper system the paper would have to be scannable in order to efficiently process the feedback. It was further noted that IT does not currently have the resources to create a scannable feedback system.

A suggestion was made that the number of feedback requests be reduced as it is too overwhelming for students and there would perhaps be more of a response if there were less forms to fill in and more specific questions. It was raised that there is a system for specific feedback: the student hotline, which can be used all year round.

ACTION: Report JCCU's collective concern on the numbers of students completing course feedback to TC, and note the desire to return to the previous paper based model, which had a much higher return rate.

ACTION: The student representatives of the JCCU committee to raise awareness of the student hotline

(c) Mathematics Department Library

Students expressed a desire to access the department library on the ground floor of the South Wing, particularly to access books that are not readily available elsewhere. It was noted that this is a research library, and not for undergraduate use, and undergraduate books are available in the Radcliffe Science Library (RSL), and there is a process for ensuring books on reading lists are obtained by the RSL. Undergraduate students requiring a particular book which is only available in the department library for their dissertation, can arrange to consult this book in the RSL, by applying to the librarian.

ACTION: Consider setting up a reading list for the part C / OMMS dissertation course, so that books on this list are obtained by the RSL. Add information about the possibility to consult books

only held in the department library for the dissertation in the RSL to the dissertation information guidance, so students know of this possibility, and how to make such a request.

It was raised that students would like to have access to the books in the study room. It was discussed that these books and the key belongs to either MURC or the Invariants and has potentially been misplaced.

ACTION: Find out who has the key for books kept in the institute study room (Potentially Invariants or MURC)

(d) Exam entry

A concern was raised about how early students need to register for exams. The Department is sympathetic, but the timing is driven by the University, and there are a lot of constraints in timetabling and producing exams. It was raised that the exam change fee is also a concern amongst students as it could potentially disadvantage some students. It was noted that the change of exams fee is a University wide policy, not a departmental one.

6. Minutes from Department of Mathematics Teaching Committee (for information only)

(a) Minutes from the meeting held on (03-05-23)

(b) Unconfirmed minutes from the meeting held on (03-05-23)

(c) ACTION: list of recommendations for Intercollegiate classes discussed in previous meetings

7. Part B and C Options (for information)

(a) Registration for mathematics Part B and Part C courses

Draft synopses will be published shortly and students will be asked to register for courses by Friday of week 10 TT.

(b) Mathematics Part B/C options fair

The Options Fair this year will be taking place in the South Mezzanine on Friday Week 4 TT23. academics will be there to answer questions that students may have about B and C courses.

(c) Projects lecture

8. A.O.B. Please inform the committee chair in advance of the meeting of items of AOB

(a) Open day.

(b) It was raised that the AV issues in lecture theatres caused issues for students who could not attend lectures in person. A suggestion was made that the lectures recorded during COVID be released to students. However, it was noted that releasing lectures en mass is not within department control as the lecturers themselves have copyright. Instead students were encouraged to flag AV issues that affected particular courses, through the hotline or to the head of Academic Administration and this could be investigated at the level of individual courses where appropriate.

