

FACULTIES OF MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH UNDERGRADUATES

A meeting of this committee will be held on **Friday 27 October at 1pm in N4.01**, Mathematical Institute.

Present: James Newton (Chair), Mario Marcos Losada, Philipp Wiedemann, Neil Laws, Yifu Zhang, Dan Ciubotaru

In attendance: Imogen Harbinson-Frith

MINUTES

1. Meeting held on Friday 12-5-23
 - (a) Minutes (attached, JCCU Minutes 12-5-23)

The minutes were reviewed, and corrections were made.

- (b) Matters arising
 - (i) Times of future meetings

It was noted that all JCCU meetings will be Friday's of week 3 at 1pm.

- (ii) Other Matters arising

It was also noted that an action grid needs to be constructed. It was also noted that academic admin needs to have a discussion with IT about streamlining student feedback to increase student responses.

A concern was raised that the Whitehead Library is not accessible to undergraduate students. **ACTION: AA to discuss this concern with the librarian – Cathy Hunt.**

It was also raised that the books in the study room need to be unlocked by FM as the key has been lost. **ACTION: AA to contact FM**

2. Membership of JCCU (*for information*)
 - (a) Senior Members
 - (b) Junior Members

It was noted that elections for MURC will be at the end of Michaelmas.

3. Report on matters raised in Examiners Reports (*oral report*)

[All examiners reports will be available on the Mathematical Institute's website, <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/students/undergraduate-courses/examinations-assessments/examiners-reports.>]

It was raised that there was a typo in the Part B examiners report. **ACTION: AA to resolve this.**

It was raised that students expressed frustration at Part B scaling, especially the scaling of the Logic and Set Theory courses. It was noted that one student's 47 out of 50 mark on a Logic paper was scaled to 70 out of 100. A concern was raised about the gender gap evident in all examiners' reports. It was noted that the department is very aware of this issue and has been attempting to lessen the gap. Diversifying assessment is one possibility under discussion. However, it was noted by Neil Laws that in Statistics even on coursework-based courses, such as master's courses, the gender gap is still evident.

4. Reports from the meetings of the Faculty/Teaching/Academic Committees (*for discussion*)

(a) Mathematics

i. Lecture Capture

It was noted that there are some issues in L2, the lecture capture is too dark to see. It was also noted that there are some issues with the sound not working. However, it was raised that some students have had a positive experience with the new system. **ACTION: Issues to be passed on to IT.**

ii. Fridays@2

A concern was raised about the lack of attendance in the Friday's at 2 sessions. A suggestion was made that the Friday's at 2 sessions be targeted more at the incoming freshers.

iii. Intercollegiate Classes

It was raised that students are frustrated by Intercollegiate classes and by the recent changes made to the process. It was noted that students would prefer to have more marking. It was also noted that students do not mind the use of A,B,C sections in the problem sheets. However, a concern was raised that on some courses section B is often too short or arbitrary. It was also noted that Sheet 1 is often being used as a revision sheet. It was raised that given the reduction in marking students would prefer if the revision sheets remained sheet 0. It was suggested that this be mentioned to Dmitry Belyaev so to ensure that the problem sheets are being administered in the intended way. It was raised that students would prefer to be given all the solutions to the problem sheets. However, it was noted that this would cause issues for Visiting students who's problem sheet marks are summative. **ACTION: AA to review the department guidance for visiting students.**

A concern was raised about the amount of time students have to wait to get a response from academic admin after registration has closed and they have requests that have to be manually implemented by academic admin. It was noted that academic admin are aware of this issue but are overwhelmed by the number of queries. It was also noted that many of the delays are caused by TMS and Moodle not syncing resulting and every change having to be entered manually twice.

It was also raised that students are frustrated by the use of large classes. It was noted that classes of this size are more like lectures than classes. It was noted that larger classes are standard at other universities. A suggestion was made for the larger classes to be made more collaborative, for example: getting students to work in groups. It was also raised that students would likely not be comfortable being pulled up to the board in a large class. It was noted that students have appreciated that the larger classes have led to shorter long waiting lists during the registration process. **ACTION: JN to raise Intercollegiate classes issues at Teaching Committee.**

iv. MURC Reps

It was noted that MURC will potentially be changing some of their committee titles and roles. It was raised that it would be useful for Academic Admin to assist with MURC elections again this year. **ACTION: MURC, AA, and James Newton to liaise about election arrangements and aid with promotion.**

v. Proposed Part A changes (Attached)

It was noted that students are generally happy with these changes. It was raised that students do not see the reason why Probability should be made mandatory as so many students already take it anyway. A concern was raised about how Geometry would be structured, students would like the course to remain relevant for other courses such as Algebraic Curves. It was also noted that adding an additional topic to the Topology course caused some concern, as it was felt that the final part of the Topology course already feels quite different to the earlier material. It was asked whether students would have enough short options. A concern was raised that there are more students taking the course than the exam. A concern was raised about scaling the short options paper as the papers are modular. It was noted that there is a working group already in place to discuss this. **ACTION: JN to discuss with Dan Ciubotaru.**

It is proposed that quantum theory would be moved from Michaelmas term to Hilary term. It was noted that there are no major concerns from students regarding this change. But a concern was raised about whether the course will lose popularity when it is moved. It was also raised that, similarly to the proposal to make probability compulsory, students do not mind the change but are unsure why it is taking place.

vi. Teaching Committee 18th of October Minutes (Attached)

(b) Statistics

It was noted that there are discussions about how to simplify exam reports for the external examiners. It was also noted that the lecture capture system in statistics has been fixed.

(c) Items to refer to Faculty/Teaching/Academic Committees

5. MURC Business

It was suggested by MURC that TMS registration be kept open for longer to allow students more time to shift classes or unenroll from courses themselves. It was noted that the splitting of part B and C sign ups was very helpful and resulted in TMS crashing less. It was also raised that students are not opposed to choosing their courses earlier. However, a concern was raised that this could have an impact on Academic Admin's busy period during exams. **ACTION: AA to see if any of the suggestions made by MURC to could be implemented to improve the Intercollegiate classes process.**

6. Questionnaires (*for report and discussion*)

It was noted that these have not yet been gathered and need to be presented at the next JCCU meeting. **ACTION: AA to gather questionnaires.**

7. Open Days in 2023-24 (*for report*)

It was noted that there are no open days in Michaelmas.

8. AOB