Minutes of the meeting of the Teaching Committee on Thursday 6th October, 2005, in L3 Mathematical Institute.

- **Present:** Dr G. Luke (Chair), Prof C.J.K. Batty, Dr M.J. Collins, Prof A. Wilkie, Dr H.A. Priestley, Dr C.N. Laws, Dr A. Fowler, Dr W.A. Day, Dr A. Dancer, Dr W.B. Stewart, Dr I. Moroz, Dr J. Dyson

- **In attendance:** Mr Yan-Chee Yu (Deputy academic administrator)

1 Mathematics Part II

1. Dr Priestley raised the issue of the immense amount of work involved in examining Part II. She pointed out that for some courses, several sets of questions for separate papers needed to be set. Dr Luke pointed out that the issue of multiple setting had now been addressed and that Oxford has only half the number of options which Cambridge offers.

2. The question of overlap between the Functional Analysis and $C^*$-Algebras courses was raised but this has been addressed for this year. This will not recur, as Banach Algebras are no longer part of the Functional Analysis course.

3. Dr Priestley noted that ensuring that the wording of questions is clear and simple, particularly for those who are not native English speakers, had involved a substantial amount of editorial work, and that this will remain a problem this year.

4. Dr Priestley noted that both external examiners recommended that Part C should be separately classified.

5. Dr Priestley pointed out that care should be taken to ensure that H-level and M-level courses taught as part of Joint School operations are of the appropriate level.

6. Dr Priestley expressed concern over lecturers setting questions and then dropping hints about what may be examined.
7. External examiner Prof MacPherson pointed out that it was very difficult to check a question with solutions that were too brief. Dr Collins suggested that such solutions be sent back with the instruction that the solution should give an answer which would attract full marks. Dr Luke also suggested that it may be useful to have setters invigilating.

2 Mathematics Part B

1. Dr Priestley raised concerns over publication of data used to convert raw marks into USMs included in exam reports, as with small cohorts of students, the possibility of students recovering their raw marks was a possibility. Prof Batty and Dr Luke agreed that the reports should be carefully checked before being published on the web.

2. It was agreed that Dr Luke should consult the Proctors again about how to deal with the disallowed USM from paper B5. [Since the meeting, new instructions have been issued by the Proctors.]

3. Support staff were asked to set up the front page of exam papers.

4. It was noted that care should be taken to ensure that, during the checking process, draft model solutions are kept up to date and in line with the draft questions.

5. It was noted that no definitive list for 3 and 4 year candidates exists or has existed, and it was agreed that checking mechanisms were to be put in place this year to ensure that one is created.

6. In cases of students presenting medical certificates, the examiners recommended that there should be a mechanism by which Part A examiners can commend a case to Part B examiners.

7. Mathematical Sciences Part I: Dr Luke believed this was a worthwhile exercise and external examiner Prof Rees was satisfied with the result.

3 Mathematics Part A

1. Dr Priestley raised concerns that the reviews of questions did not consider comparability between subjects.

2. Dr Luke proposed that marks for presentation be removed, but that the matter of the final decision be passed on to the teaching committee.

3. It was agreed that the instruction to write on one side to the paper only should be removed.

4. It was noted that some students were answering extra questions, although it was not felt that this was being done to gain an advantage.
4 Mathematics Moderations and Prelims

1. Dr Luke has taken executive action and replaced the “weak-paper rule” and acted on the suggestion that students must gain a mark of 30 on at least 2 papers in Mods in order to gain a Pass.

2. The teaching committee has already agreed that questions can be set to consist of two or three parts and an indication of raw marks available on each part will be put on the question paper.

5 Mathematics & Philosophy Part II

1. Dr Priestley reported that, despite her objections, the Philosophy examiners had insisted on re-reading the Part I scripts of borderline candidates, where USMs had been assigned in the previous year.

6 Mathematics & Philosophy Part B

1. Prof Batty suggested that the chairman of the Part B committee should always come from one school and the chairman for Part C from the other school. This will be referred to the Mathematics & Philosophy standing committee.

2. Prof Batty also proposed that there should be two co-ordinators on the examining board, one from Maths and one from Philosophy, which was agreed.

7 Mathematics & Statistics Parts A & B

1. It was confirmed that up to 2 Mathematics & Statistics examiners, including an external examiner, will attend the maths recalibration meeting.

8 Classification of 3 & 4 year candidates

1. Prof Batty proposed that all students be given a provisional classification after 3 years, in case any of them were subsequently permitted to supplicate for a BA.