

# Teaching Committee Minutes

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2pm, Appleton Tower Room 7.14

Present:

Alan Smaill (Convenor)  
Stuart Anderson (Director of Teaching)  
Sharon Goldwater  
Ian Simpson  
Iain Murray  
Gillian Bell  
Julian Bradfield  
Barbara Webb  
Helen Pain  
Colin Stirling

In Attendance: Gregor Hall (administrator)

**18.08 Apologies for Absence:** Paul Anderson  
Alex Lascarides  
Christophe Dubache  
Mary Cryan

**18.09** Minutes of previous meetings – approved.

**18.10** Matters Arising -----

(Extraordinary TC 29th June 2017; Item 2) - Late Submission of Coursework.

ACTION: DoT to inform teaching staff of late penalties process.

RESPONSE: Late Coursework & Extension Requests webpage updated with policy on 5% daily penalties, Gillian Bell – COMPLETE.

(TC 10th May 2017, Matters Arising 3.2) - Revised Exam Scrutiny Process.

ACTION: Convenors to collaborate on progressing the new scrutiny process. (Teaching Committee policy pages still to be created and this item to be added - ITO / Communication Team - OUTSTANDING.)

RESPONSE: after feedback on the scrutiny process from staff, Alan Smaill produced a document for discussion. One member was very reluctant to use the new Scrutiny document – the traditional method of marking up a copy of the exam paper was considered to be more efficient. It was the view of the ITO that general engagement from Teaching Staff with the process had not been encouraging. The Year 3 Convenor was unhappy with the Vetting Committee stage, as the exams designated as VUGs are Years 3, 4, 5 and MSc, covering too wide a spectrum. Another member thought the timetable for exam setting had not been made clear and due to the extra task of reviewing was compressed compared to previous years. It was suggested that the review and Vetting stages could be decoupled in order to make the process more flexible.

**ACTION:** ITO to update Semester 2 Exam Setting Deadlines.

(TC May 10th, Item 4) - Proposal to Remove Elevated Hurdles for Progression to Honours - B. Franke.  
ACTION: current DoT to contact other schools regarding Joint programmes. Chased 31/10/2017.  
ACTION: DoT to contact Business School, Convenor to contact PPLS.

**18.04** Moderating IPP Marks – G.Sanguinetti

The revised proposal was discussed. One member did not believe that PhD students had the ability to do this properly, another agreed and said that it should be done by faculty, despite the resource issues. Another said that PhDs should take any issues they find to staff, but the reply to this was that staff would just agree. One criticism of the system was that there were no marking guidelines, and that a proper marking form, with guidelines, should be provided. It was suggested that staff could do this in exchange for a tutor group role. The Convenor pointed out that a new policy does exist for general moderation (approved 28<sup>th</sup> September) from the Institute for Academic Development, which provides best practice advice, but may be difficult to apply.

**ACTION:** The DoT will consult with the Convenors on the subject and get back to the proposer.

**18.05** TSPL change in exam diet – COMPLETE.

**18.07-1** Change in Granting Extensions for Coursework – COMPLETE.

**18.07-2** Coursework deadlines – COMPLETE.

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**18.11** Updates on Curriculum Review – Sharon Goldwater

The proposer took the committee through the paper, emphasising the difficulty in maintaining quality with the large number of courses on offer. One member was of the opinion that small courses didn't have too much impact as they required little resource to run. Another member was critical of what they saw as the Board of Studies approving pretty much any course that was proposed. The DoT said that the large number of students (900 UGs, 300 Post-grads) demanded a tightening of the curriculum structure in order to improve the quality of teaching. His view was that there was no magic bullet for this and that a combination of actions would be required to improve the situation. One action would be a reduction in the number of courses offered, with a "core" of courses covering essential areas, and remaining non-quota. Outside this core, some courses could be amalgamated. Other courses could be run depending upon the available teaching resource remaining once the core was adequately supported. The institutes could be consulted as how to divide up resource after the core resource was decided. The second action would be to look at improving resource - altering the amount of teaching support that PhDs are contractually obliged to do. The current model of lecturers recruiting PhDs was found by a committee member to be odd, and it was thought that PhDs needed more incentive to get involved in teaching support.

It mentioned that the allocation of teaching staff did not reflect upon the lecturing ability of the staff, and another member said that it used to be the case that only proven lecturers were allocated to compulsory first and second year courses. The lack of records on the agreements made about teaching posts with the Head of School did not help the issue.

From an absent member of staff: No serious concerns with this preliminary review, and I think the thoughts of restricting options for year 3 are a good thing. Right now students can come out of the CS degree (and probably the AI one also) while missing a lot of core content that would be expected from a graduate in that area.

**18.12 Draft Learning and Teaching Plan - Director of Teaching**

The DoT introduced his paper, and discussion followed. One issue was the introduction of sub-committees, comprising the Convenors/DoT, perhaps meeting 2 or 3 times a year. These might cover issues such as on-course management, the impact of curriculum changes, and teaching quality. The DoT promoted the re-introduction of SSLC as a semesterly meeting. The SSLC process was criticised for having no real structure which could be used to tackle the issues raised. This also brought the role of the Year Organiser into question – a committee member wondered if some of the tasks involved has disseminated over the years.

**ACTION:** ITO – to hold SSLCs this semester. The DoT will review the roles of Year Organiser.

**18.13 Pointer to the School Plan – Martin Wright**

The School plan must be reviewed annually. This feeds into the previous items.

**18.14 Discussion Paper: Curriculum Structure - Director of Teaching**

The DoT introduced this paper and discussion was invited. One advantage of an integrated masters is the smaller first year cohort as the entire class size is spread across the five years. A committee member voiced one possible drawback – In other institutions third year students who don't get a 2:1 overall mark or better end up on the Honours programme, and for this reason the Honours programmes become looked at as if they were “lesser”. Another member voiced concerns about funding – we don't want to make it look as if we prefer one programme over the other. Compliance with the Bologna Accord and Entry to Year 4 as a 2 Year masters were also discussed.

From absent member: I think it would be nice to so A and B for the Integrated Masters, especially as we now have trimmed down the BSc options. Depends on how much of admin overload it would add I think. Also like the ideas for "limited choice" in 3rd year, this relates to my comment for 18.11

**18.15 Recruitment Committee report – Helen Pain**

Helen ran through the report, and went into detail on the financial incentives being provided to encourage more female candidates to convert their applications.

**18.16 – AOCB****18.16-01 Food and Drink in Labs – G.Bell**

We currently have no School policy on food in labs.

**ACTION:** ITO will put up signs discouraging eating in computer labs.

**18.16-02 Appleton Tower refurb – Level 5** will be refurbished and suggestions are invited from staff on layouts / technology, etc. that may improve our facilities. The DoT mentioned the possibility of the West Lab (5.05) as a Teaching studio.

**18.16-03** The Informatics Senior tutor raised the issue of students having to sign in to the Forum – he was of the opinion that students should be able to swipe in during standard working hours.

**ACTION:** ITO to look into this.