

Teaching Committee Minutes

Wednesday 8th February, 2pm, Room 1.B10 Forrest Hill

Present: Alan Smaill (Convenor)
Björn Franke (Director of Teaching)
Dragan Gasevic
Iain Murray
Michael Fourman
Christophe Dubache
Frank Keller
Johanna Moore
Sharon Goldwater
Fotios Papadogeorgopoulos (student rep)
Helen Pain

In Attendance: Gregor Hall (administrator)

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Charles Sutton
Don Sannella
Mary Cryan
Jane Hillston
Richard Shillcock
Ian Simpson
Paul Anderson
Henry Thompson

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

3. Matters Arising - reviewing actions from Dec 2016 meeting:

2.1 Minutes on Borderline decision policy – Alan Smaill to provide.

2.2 MSc Dissertation moderation practice – document complete, needs uploaded.

2.3 Special Circumstances (item 14 from Nov 2016 minutes) - ongoing

2.4 November minutes updated.

4 PT responsibilities for Study Abroad Students: Hiroshi Shimodaira was satisfied that our webpage already covered any points raised by the International Office document.

5 1st Year Tutorials / Articulation between Maths & Informatics UG1 Teaching– M.Fourman not present – delayed until this Wed 8th Feb 2017 Teaching Committee.

6 Use of Mid-Semester 2 Non-Teaching week for UG3 SDP students - Actioned

10.2 AGA Fellowship – contacted Barbara Webb who did not know what AGA membership was, but said this might refer to Higher Education Academy fellowship. Link added to December 2016 minutes.

4. Learning Analytics Policy Development – Dragan Gasevic: a summary of the draft document in the agenda was provided and comments were invited. The question of access to the learning data was raised – what data would staff be able to access, and who would have access? The manner in which course surveys could be used to monitor the performance of staff was brought up, to which the reply was that this was not the intention or purpose of Learning Analytics. The effect of legislation – both UK and EU – was mentioned; for instance how it would affect the stance of getting students to opt in or opt out. The need for transparency was stated and the involvement of the University Chief Information Security Officer was confirmed. The Draft Policy statement was welcomed by the Teaching Committee.

5. 1st Year Tutorials and Articulation between Maths and Informatics - Michael Fourman:

5.1 It was pointed out that the policy of each faculty member teaching two tutorials, at least one of which was a Non-Honours course, had not been followed in recent years, and that the bulk of tutorials were taught by students. The principle that the function of tutorials is not to just help students pass exams, but to provide them with a greater understanding of the subject matter, was expressed. It was opined that non-staff were fine at providing resolutions to problems but were less able when providing depth and context, but other committee members disagreed. Another opinion offered was that whilst staff had a deeper understanding of the subject matter they may not necessarily express that understanding well. The fact of resourcing – that the current staff were maxed out when it came to availability for teaching - was brought up.

ACTION: the Director of Teaching was tasked with looking into possible solutions.

5.2 The second issue was a concern of the ability and understanding of linear algebra among first year students. It was proposed that the students would need a few more hours of lessons within INF1-CL to cover this knowledge gap, and this was approved.

ACTION: MF to adjust learning outcomes of this course for Board of Studies Approval; cc Alex Welsh.

6. December Exam Diet Marking Deadlines - Michael Fourman: these were considered to be very tight, the time given to mark December exams being less than in the April/May diet. It was noted that no single policy for exam marking deadlines was in place, and that more exams are planned for the December diet. At the same time it was expressed that exam results arrived rather late to help students decide upon course selection.

ACTION: BF to liaise with ITO and generate a draft policy, with a final policy to be in effect by December 2017 exam diet.

7. Director of Teaching's report - Björn Franke

7.1 Splitting of Classes: the DoT was considering the issue of the considerable increase in size of many classes. One suggestion was double teaching courses - more lectures, split by cohort. Another suggestion was the use of overspill lectures. Yet another was live screening, which prompted the reply that this may not be popular; although the University is due to bring in a new lecture recording system, some students may feel excluded. The point that double teaching would increase pressure on staff who are already stretched thin was made.

ACTION: BF to continue this discussion outside the Committee; cc Vicky MacTaggart due to Timetabling involvement.

7.2 MSc Project Allocation: the varying popularity of different supervisors was causing issues, which meant that the most popular supervisors require support of some kind. One possibility might be to pay PhD students to support the supervisors.

ACTION: BF to speak to supervisors.

8. Proposed Change in the Exam Scrutiny process - Alan Smail: The proposal, whereby exams would be scrutinised by a small team of two knowledgeable staff, a setter and a vetter, was read to the committee. One issue was highlighted - that of consistency, and it was acknowledged that an overall review might be required. A response to this was that an option similar to that used in Dundee University might be used, whereby a moderator checks the vettors comments to provide a further level of scrutiny before the External Examiner sees the exam, and one form, accessible by all, is used to provide a clear paper trail of scrutiny.

ACTION: HP to provide an example of this system to BF and AS for further consideration.

9. Necessity of Year Organiser Reports as a standing item - Alan Smail: It was proposed that only one yearly report was necessary at Teaching Committee as monthly reports were sparse. This was countered by the observation that weekly student rep meetings produced lots of discussion points, which would seem to contradict the lack of reports. Inviting the Year Organisers to the student reps meeting was suggested.

ACTION: BF to revise Year Organiser job description; Kendal Reid to invite year organisers to student rep meetings.

10. Year Organiser Reports - Paul Anderson / Rik Sarkar / Christophe Dubach / Mahesh Marina / Paul Jackson: CD was the only Year Organiser present and had nothing to present.

11. Student Access to Examination Scripts - Björn Franke: The old policy and the proposed changes, taken from the School of Mathematics, was presented. It was

suggested that any proposed changes allow transparency whilst preventing mass bargaining situations. Item 5, which proposes that Non-Honours students can see the marking guides, was questioned. The view that marking guides are not model solutions, and not appropriate for viewing in all cases, was put forward. This was countered by the fact that students have, up until now, been able to view these online on the Informatics webpages. One member said that feedback is poor if it is just numbers, and another that proper formative feedback is given in term-time. The Committee approved the policy.

ACTION: ITO to put policy in place.

12. Exam Rubric Clarification - Björn Franke: the proposal to change the rubric to prevent students from answering more questions than required was presented. The first proposed rubric states: "If more than one of the other questions remains, only the first answer will be marked" which prompted the question – does this mean the first question in the exam paper, or the first question in the student's script? This is answered by the second proposed rubric, which specifies that "If both QUESTION 2 and QUESTION 3 remain, only QUESTION 2 will be marked." It was pointed out that a rubric would be needed where ANY 2 out of three questions can be asked. It was decided that this should be:

"Answer any two of the three questions. If more than 2 questions are answered, marks from QUESTION [first question number] and QUESTION [second question number] will be taken." The Committee approved this.

ACTION: ITO to action on exam PCs.

13. Recruitment Committee report - Helen Pain: the proposer commented that the University appeared to be doing well, and it was remarked that the University was defying the national trend, where Home and EU admissions were stable, with other categories dropping.

14. AOCB – none.