Teaching Committee Minutes

Wednesday 10th May, 2pm, Turing Room (IF-5.42)

Present: Alan Smaill (Convenor)

Björn Franke (Director of Teaching)

Christophe Dubache

Sharon Goldwater

Gillian Bell

Colin Stirling

Paul Anderson

Mary Cryan

Michael Rovatsos

Neil Heatley

Helen Pain

Frank Keller

Julian Bradfield

Iain Murray

Kami Vaniea

In Attendance: Gregor Hall (administrator)

1. **Apologies for Absence:**   Ram Ramamoorthy

Don Sannella

Richard Shillcock

Michael Fourman

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting –** Item 3.1 "marks will be directly entered into EUCLID".(not Theon)
ACTION: updated by ITO, 11/05/2017.

3. **Matters Arising** - reviewing actions from April 2017 Teaching Committee:

   3.1 Exam Marking Guide and Deadlines – DoT & ITO (from 8th Feb meeting, item 6):
   ACTION: ITO to start using the guide for the May diet of exams.
   RESPONSE: Guide now in use.

   3.2 Revised Exam Scrutiny Process – Alan Smaill (from 15th March meeting item 5):

Alan presented his policy to the Committee. The DoT stated the need for the Year Organisers to contact their lecturers about this process. Teaching Committee approved this policy.

ACTION: ITO to add policy to website, and email Y.O's and Convenors.

RESPONSE: Teaching Committee policy page to be created and this item to be added.

***One committee member mentioned that we need policy in one location – a TC Policy page will be created shortly by Sego Gallus.

4. Director of Teaching's report - Björn Franke.

ACTION: DoT to contact MSc Dissertation co-ordinators regarding holiday preparation.

RESPONSE: Done! (21/04/2017)

6.1 Year Organiser Report – Alan Smaill

ACTION: DoT to confirm that Yearly SSLC meetings are no longer held. Issue of when the Year Organisers should report still outstanding.

RESPONSE: Confirmed that yearly SSLCs have been replaced by weekly meetings with student reps and "forum" meetings with the DoT and year organisers at the start of the academic year (and whenever else needed). Copied in Stuart for information.

6.2 Coursework Deadlines – Mary Cryan

ACTION: ITO to look into the creation of a School of Informatics webpage (perhaps with a Google Calendar) that lists all coursework deadlines.

RESPONSE: done, new deadline calendar can be found at:

http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/ito/admin/coursework-projects/semester-time-coursework-deadlines

ACTION: The Theon functionality which deals with coursework deadlines needs to be decommissioned; Gillian Bell to action with Tim Colles.

(originally from March 2017 Committee meeting)
6: Ordinary Degree Handling - Björn Franke & Gillian Bell
ACTION: Björn Franke to form a team to put together a full proposal to be presented at the next TC. [emailed 05/04/2017, chased 11/04/2017]
RESPONSE: See tabled item 4.

(originally from March 2017 Committee meeting)
8. Director of Teaching's report - Björn Franke
ACTION: DoT to seek out interest in the Deputy DoT role.
RESPONSE: Stuart has taken the lead on this. My action is completed.

(originally from March 2017 Committee meeting)

9.AOCB: Kami Vaniea is Coordinator of Equality and Diversity and also performs outreach functions. The creation of an Academic Outreach Officer would ease the burden on the C.E.D and improve the Outreach function. Such a post would require an academic.

ACTION: Helen will find an academic to fill the role of Academic Outreach and Public Engagement Officer.

REPSONSE: in progress.

4. **Proposal to Remove Elevated Hurdles for Progression to Honours - Björn Franke**

BF took the committee through the proposal. The Committee discussed it at length and after some time the chair asked for a decision. The Committee agreed to remove the elevated hurdles, with a note to keep strict control on concessions for student progression. It was also agreed that in the case of Joint Programmes the Schools involved would need to be consulted.

ACTION: DoT to contact other schools regarding Joint programmes.

5. **Penalties for Late Course Work - Gillian Bell**

Gillian introduced the proposal. Many issues were raised, which included the following:

- Setting a figure for "substantial" instantly divides up our courses into hard deadline or penalties; this dichotomy may prove confusing for students
- The difficulties in introducing penalties for courses that have feedback sessions in a very short period after submission
- The pedagogical value in hard deadlines
- The beneficial impact of a penalty system in reducing stress amongst the student body

Another major issue was how to implement such a system. Points raised included:

- The problems involved in using, and general suitability of the DICE "submit" system; the fact that it overwrites each submission
- Who would be responsible for checking/imposing penalties (ITO or markers)
- Students making submissions after the deadline and any related complications
- Courses that use hard copies, not electronic submissions
- Feedback

It was suggested that in order to promote consistency that the School of Informatics could adopt a default position of using penalties of 5% per day. Exceptions to this could be made as long as the student body was clearly informed which courses used penalties and which did not. The proposal was put to a vote and a majority agreed. The DoT suggested that this should be further refined with more detail. It was agreed that teaching staff should be informed of any progress on this. The Year Handbooks were mentioned as one source of dissemination.

ACTION: ITO to investigate the possible submission systems that could be used and to bring to Committee for scrutiny.

6. **December Exams and UG4 Project Deadline - Sharon Goldwater**

   SG introduced her proposal, the main potential action of which is to move the UG4/5 deadline one week later. The proposal was then discussed. Two committee members volunteered anecdotal evidence of Personal Tutees strong opinions on the subject, some being for, some being against. One member voiced the opinion that students completing their project need some breathing space before getting into revision for exams, and that moving the deadline closer to the exams puts more pressure on the students. Another opinion was that the University seemed to be leaning towards placing more exams in the December diet, and that some students preferred to have their exams more evenly distributed. It was suggested that the proposal could make marking more difficult for staff at that time of year. The Committee decided that overall the deadline was best left where it is, as the effect of the three new December diet exams could be seen in due course.

7. **Director of Teaching Report - Björn Franke**

   This was the current DoT's last Teaching Committee meeting. The only item was that the University would be included in the National Student Survey.

8. **Recruitment Committee Report – Helen Pain**

   HP took the Committee through the report. This year was in general an improvement for Scottish applicants but the numbers were down for EU students. The criteria for PG selection have been tightened up and the deposit scheme will be in place next year. Next year there will be two deadlines; the second deadline will be positioned to take into account those students applying to programmes in the United States.

9. **AOCB:** none.