

Teaching Committee Minutes for 24th February 2021

Informatics Teaching Committee Minutes

Present: Neil Heatley, Jade Gilhooly, Clara Fraser, Bjorn Franke, Alexandra birch-Mayne, Alex Burford, Luo Mai, Auroura Constantin, Sharon Goldwater, Karen Davidson, Liam O'Connor, Michael Herrmann, Antonio Barbalace, Paul Jackson, Raul Sanchez Garcia-Patron, Oisin Mac Aodha, Thomas Zacharias, Heather Yorston, Myrto Arapanis, Elizabeth Polgreen, Hakan Bilen, Tim Colles, Sophie Mills, James Garforth, Tom Spink, Cristina Alexandru, Iain Murray, Bjorn Ross, David Sterratt, Paolo Guagliardo, Nadin Kokciyan, Stuart Anderson, Perdita Stevens, Valerio Restocchi, Julian Bradfield, Ava Khamseh

1. **Apologies:** Gillian Bell, Milos Nikolic, Jane Hillston, Siddharth N, John Lee, Maria Wolters
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** – confirmed as correct

Actions from previous minutes still to be actioned:

- Establishing a Welfare and Support Sub-Committee of Teaching Committee
ACTION- Make it mandatory for all students to complete the HR unconscious bias training which can be completed online. – Stuart Anderson
ACTION – Do some research and look at other institutions to see what they have done for this particular issue. – Stuart Anderson & Paul Jackson?
ACTION- Add standard items to the Teaching Committee Agenda for Welfare Group – Clara Fraser- **COMPLETED**
ACTION – Bring final Welfare report from first meeting to the next Teaching Committee meeting, including drawing up resources to solve the issue of sexism in the labs. – **Paul Jackson** – **IN PROGRESS**
- Exam Script Feedback - Provide a summary at the next meeting – Paul Jackson – **COMPLETED**
- Try to move coursework submissions to Gradescope for Sem 2 – Bjorn Franke
- Dissertation Page Limit – Iain Murray offered to help B.Webb with limit – **COMPLETED** but still need to report back on as was missed off last meeting

3. Matters Arising

T and D funding for 2021 onwards - Bjorn Franke

There is a new Teaching Support Policy where they have introduced a new system to allocate Teaching Staff, with a budget for the individual course. The course will be given an allocation and it can be used to suit the course.

Within certain years some courses are more resource intensive, and having the new policy makes sure that they can be prioritized more than other courses that are less intensive. Currently this is in a modelling phase, some courses may get an increase in budget if they need it, and others may need less. Consultation from the Strategy Committee and Course Organisers will be needed, so everyone can see how this will run before it is put in place.

There will also be a modelling tool spreadsheet where you can enter what you need for example hours for markers/TA's and see what allocation works best.

We hope to have more information on this new policy soon.

Preparing Lectures for 2021/22 – Neil Heatley

The University and Scottish Government have informed schools that the students are to be back in Edinburgh for September 2021. There will be waivers or exceptions for a small number of students, but at the moment we don't know how this will work.

The school is working to a standard that if there are over 100 students taking a course, then the course will be held online, and social distancing will still be in place for any courses that will be on campus.

Academics should use this time to reflect on materials that already exist, and if pre-recorded lectures are being used, then to have these ready before the term starts, so there's no inconsistency when they are released to the students.

By having six months to prepare the materials, this should hopefully ease the pressure when the new term starts, and gives time to fix any of the recordings, and to add and correct any subtitles that are being used.

A question was raised to see if we can use Zoom as well as using Teams, as Zoom has functions that are beneficial for certain classes such as quizzes, polling and break-out rooms. The Learn Technologists mentioned that Zoom will be integrated with Learn this summer, and if there are any questions to get in touch with them.

ACTION –Look into having this confirmed for staff who may wish to use Zoom. - Neil Heatley

There will be a meeting coming up soon to discuss room and spaces. Appleton Tower spaces for Tutorials are ours, but the other University spaces are shared so many people may be requesting those spaces.

ACTION– Report back at next meeting with what spaces we have available. – **Bjorn Franke**

Recruitment Activities 2021 & Recruitment Report – Neil Heatley

This was on the Agenda for last week before the meeting was rescheduled, but these points were discussed yesterday at the School General Meeting.

Neil gave a brief summary for anyone who missed this and noted that Informatics is aiming for a UG community of 1000, and PGT community of 350. The UK numbers are down, but the University is doing everything they can to achieve these numbers.

The English requirements for the 2022 intake have been moved to the higher band.

For Undergraduate students, previously there were a number of places funded by the Scottish Government and these ended up being taken up by EU students. It was assumed those numbers this year would be cut back, but it looks like there may be more places for Scottish Students this year. Details still need to be shared regarding this.

There has been more active advertising for the MSc programmes Advanced technology for Financial Computing and Cyber Security. Both of these programmes we want to grow to provide a bit of relief from the other large MSc programmes.

Exam Script Feedback Summary– Paul Jackson

Students have fed back that exam feedback isn't useful especially at honours level, they only receive marks and see if the additions are correct, but no written feedback. We regularly have complaints about this from students, both directly to Personal Tutors and at Year rep meetings, and through national surveys such as NSS.

Paul had a look at some practice that is going on currently in the University of Manchester in the Maths department. Feedback doesn't have to be the answers and feedback on the marking, but you could point out common mistakes, how students have lost certain marks, or give feedback on parts that students did well. The school had good feedback from the students and that they liked it, and lecturers respected this was a good way forward to maybe improve their questions for next time if parts didn't read correctly or were confusing.

The committee had no negative comments on this, but it was asked how this would work for classes that have say 1000 students. Feedback could be prepared for the whole class rather than individually, or individual markers for groups could collect feedback and release it this way. This could be put on the past papers webpage for students to look at.

It was noted also that Gradescope has a function that can release the averages which are relative to the cohort. This is for the whole exam but would need looked into if there is a function for this for each individual question instead.

ACTION — Ask the Maths department how they use this and explore how best to provide this information. - **Neil Heatley and Heather Yorston**