

## Teaching Committee Minutes for 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021

### Informatics Teaching Committee Minutes

**Present:** Neil Heatley, Jade Gilhooly, Clara Fraser, Bjorn Franke,

1. **Apologies:**
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** – confirmed as correct
3. **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. – **COMPLETED**

**ACTION** – Do some research and look at other institutions to see what they have done for this particular issue. – Stuart Anderson & Paul Jackson? - **COMPLETED**

**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 – COMPLETED**

Stuart and Paul were happy with the first meeting that took place, it was valuable and should take place more often. The topic of sexism and elitism in the labs was covered, and the discussion was very productive. This is an ongoing issue, and everyone in the meeting was in favour of creating some type of space available for woman, and other gendered minorities. This could apply to other issues in the school, not just labs. The meeting had everyone who should have been there to comment.

- Dissertation Page Limit – Iain Murray offered to help B.Webb with limit – **COMPLETED**

Iain completed the page checking task again this year. The Honours Project was less smooth this year than MSc, as the UG4/5 students probably should have been reminded more of the page limit. Overall, the project coordinator thought it worked okay, and there weren't any restrictions for students.

The only issue was that because lots of students get extensions, it becomes too much work having to do the check over the space of a few weeks rather than a couple of days. It was asked if there could be an automated process of this to make it easier.

**ACTION** – Check with Computer Support about an automated page limit check. – **Iain Murray**

- Try to move coursework submissions to Gradescope for Sem 2 (roll over to semester 1?) – Bjorn Franke – **COMPLETED** Bjorn has been in touch with course organisers regarding Gradescope for coursework submissions and is now complete since the semester is over.
- A question was raised to see if we can use Zoom as well as using Teams  
**ACTION** – Look into having this confirmed for staff who may wish to use Zoom. - **Neil Heatley** - **COMPLETED**

Schools are using Teams more as a school teaching tool. Computer Support mentioned that ISG are favouring Zoom over Teams for teaching, and plan for it to be integrated with Learn.

Information will be passed round when it arrives.

- Tutorial Spaces within the University  
**ACTION**– Report back at next meeting with what spaces we have available. – **Bjorn Franke** – **COMPLETED presented at School General Meeting.**
- Gradescope function that can release the averages which are relative to the cohort.  
**ACTION** - Ask the Maths department how they use this and explore how best to provide this information. - **Neil Heatley and Heather Yorston** - **COMPLETED**

The School of Maths did not use Gradescope for class averages. It was asked if Informatics should use this format also and this would potentially tie in with the exam feedback that students request.

**ACTION** – Take item to Teaching Executive meeting to roll forward. – **Neil Heatley**

#### 4. Welfare Group (Standard Item to Agenda)

A meeting was held with a group of students on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May about the lab issue. It was mentioned that there's needs to be more subcommittee meetings, and when would be the best time to hold the next time, in Autumn or Winter?

**ACTION** – Next meeting in September time. Reflective exercise of June looking ahead to September. – **Neil Heatley/Paul Jackson**

## 5. Extensions

The extensions process this year has caused a huge amount of work and disruption. There has been 1000's of extension requests, and the SST team have been overwhelmed with the fallout from it.

It was asked how we could better refine the extensions process as a school, as some courses half the class have an extension and then this disrupts the marking timeline. This year students could apply for a 7-day extension and then on top of this apply for a special adjustment extension resulting in a 14-day extension. Because of all the changes overtime, this has resulted in the extensions Infweb page being updated 70 times, for all the new rules. For staff and students, it can be very confusing to keep up to date.

It was also mentioned should we continue with zero late penalty if the work is submitted after an extension, or use the normal 5% per day penalty.

**ACTION** – At next Teaching Executive meeting Gillian and Neil are to bring information back to TC to further discuss this. Cristina Alexandru also offered to help with this. –  
**Gillian Bell/Neil Heatley**

Students don't get the approval of the extension quickly, and this has a knock-on effect for their submissions as they will submit on time, and then once the extension is approved submit again. This is then a lot of additional work for markers. Students also feel like the service is very impersonal and is more transaction centred rather than person centred. – Gillian Bell has already fed this feedback to the ESC team to look at for next time.

A shift in marking policy was suggested that the marking deadline should be 2 weeks after the student submits, not 2 weeks after the coursework deadline.

Informatics has asked Joy to take a range of issues to DoPs, as staff are very unhappy with the new processes, and believe the rollout was not fit for purpose.

## 6. Admin Duties

Neil thanked everyone who has come back to him so far. Most of the duties have not been looked at formally since 2016, and some duties don't have a description. It's been good to get feedback from members of staff on those roles.

## 7. 2021 Teaching

Most information was given at the School General Meeting. Timetabling is underway already; the modelling is due sometime this week. This will be shared with Course Organisers.

## 8. Exceptions

Students will be expected to be in Edinburgh next semester, even if all courses are being taught online. This has been communicated to the students already. Exceptions are now available for any students who cannot be in Edinburgh. They will need to formally apply for this to work remotely. It's not clear how this will be approved, but hopefully more information will come soon on how this will be administered.

## 9. Recruitment

The Undergraduate intake is 286, and MSc is 346.

## 10. AOB

Gillian Bell brought an additional item to the meeting regarding group work, and how extensions and special circumstances requests impact the group.

It was noted other schools have no extensions for group work to avoid these issues, and all students must submit the work, not just one member of the group.

Course Organisers mentioned that a lot of the time classes do more group work due to the class size, but some students who receive extensions or apply for SC don't think to tell the other group members.

**ACTION** – Bring more solid points for next meeting to take forward. – **Gillian Bell**

## Teaching Support Budget

The Teaching Support budget has been released, and it is the plan to Bring information into next TC meeting to discuss weighting, and then the strategy committee for formal approval.

## Piazza

Report was submitted to computing strategy group, overall everyone is happy with Piazza, staff would be happier if the University paid for it. There were other tools offered but nothing as good as Piazza. More information can be found in the report later.