

Teaching Committee Minutes

Wednesday 9th May 2018, 2pm, Appleton Tower Room 7.14

Present: Alan Smaill, Convenor
Iain Murray
Ian Simpson
Chris Lucas
Gillian Bell
Alex Burford
Stephen Gilmore

In Attendance: Gregor Hall (administrator)

18.43 Apologies for Absence: Alex Lascarides, Mary Cryan, Helen Pain.

18.44 Minutes of Previous Meetings – approved

18.45 Matters Arising

(TC May 10th, Item 4) - Proposal to Remove Elevated Hurdles for Progression to Honours - B. Franke.

ACTION: DoT to contact Business School, Convenor to contact PPLS. The Convenor contacted PPLS in order to understand better how they handle this.

Action: Convenor to send details to Gillian Bell - COMPLETE.

ACTION: Convenor to speak to Vicky McTaggart in ITO.

18.04 Moderating IPP Marks - G. Sanguinetti

ACTION: It was agreed to move forward with the plan to take feedback from the tutors regarding cases they saw as unusual, and the course organiser would moderate these cases appropriately. Marking guidelines were produced by the DoT:

18.04: I have proposed a procedure to Guido for IRR and propose we use this for the IPP:

We look at all IRRs that are graded over 80 or under 50 to check those extreme marks are justified.

We take a sample of three IRRs from each group (in the range 50-59, 60-69, 70-79 and remark these (we could use tutors) and check there is good agreement with the original grade.

Where there is a significant difference we use staff to moderate.

ACTION: Send to to Samantha Stewart in ITO.

18.06-03 (AOCB) Student access to the Forum.

DoT: The decision of exec is that since students do not have working spaces in the Forum it is best to require them to sign in because we keep track of all visitors to the forum in the sign-in book. COMPLETE.

18.26 Increase in Language Requirements for MSc/AMSc in Design Informatics - Maria Wolters

ACTION: The proposal is to be deployed for academic year 2019/20, with data on the outcomes of language skills and outcomes to be examined in the meantime. The Course Descriptor is to be updated. DoT's response: this will be considered by Exec - Admissions at College queried the change. The view is our requirement need to be harmonised with the elevated requirements of the College of Art. COMPLETE.

18.27 Usage of Appleton Tower room 5.01.

Action: ITO to instigate purchase of wheeled chairs with integrated desks.

Update: The proposal has been updated to include a DICE presence in 5.01.

DoT has stated that the North Lab will be refitted as a Teaching Studio.

ACTION: ITO to investigate the options of installing DICE functionality within a flexible layout – Neil Heatley.

18.29-01 – The Convenor raised the ongoing subject of software options for coursework submission.

The Convenor is to set up a sub-committee (including as a member our new Learning Technologist) to look into the area. Two committee representatives were very much opposed to using a solution that has Web Browser front end without having the option to access using a command line terminal.

ACTION: Convenor to invite Colin Stirling and Kousha Etesami to the sub-committee to cover submission issues with DMMR which requires a very large amount of admin resource.

18.29-02 A replacement lecturer for IPP is required.

ACTION – DoT is currently running this course in lieu of an allocated lecturer. COMPLETE.

18.34 Employment of UG and MSc Tutors Policy v3 – DoT

ACTION: the policy shall be updated to permit Year 2 students to take demonstration roles as above. COMPLETE – added to webpage 21st Feb 2018:

<https://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/admin/policies/employment-ug-msc>

18.40 Reviewing BoE borderlines policy - Iain Murray

The proposer took the Committee through the proposal and invited discussion. In general the proposal was deemed sensible. The proposal was agreed.

ACTION: Policy added to Policies page: <http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/admin/policies> - COMPLETE.

ITO to also look at archiving of policies.

18.41 Exam Rubric Proposal - Sharon Goldwater

ACTION: ITO with Iain Murray - Rubric to be adopted for 2018/19.

18.42 Recruitment Report - Helen Pain

The following discussion is from the minutes of the April TC:

“As the Recruitment Officer could not be present the Convenor took the Committee through the latest report. Discussion ensued, much of it concerning the unbalanced nature of applications to MSc programmes – AI receives by far the largest number of applications. It was suggested that admissions might give preference to those only applying to Computer Science. One committee member was unsure of what we could restrict, but believed it would be reasonable to set the bar higher for programmes that are in highest demand. A member brought up the possibility of changing the structure of our programmes to provide more balance, perhaps by restricting the flexibility, but this was countered by another who pointed out that the flexibility of course choice within programmes is one of the big selling points.”

The Recruitment Officer responded to the discussion with the following:

“Re the previous meeting, if the issue comes up of balance of numbers applying for MSc programmes, discussed at the last meeting, I would strongly oppose putting any bar, quota or higher entry level on any one specific programme in the AI/CS/Inf group for a number of reasons:

1. it would be impossible to enforce as we offer our students such flexibility of course selection and the ability to switch between programmes
2. it is not clear that taking e.g. the AI MSc means that the project is really in AI, and that this entails extra load on 'AI' staff - other students can take 'AI' designated projects, and AI students take projects in a whole range of areas. For example, we have many staff in the Natural Language area whose projects would be attractive to students on the AI programme.
3. It would encourage students to apply to another programme and switch later - this would penalise the honest ones
4. We do not want cohorts that are weaker and stronger within the MSc (e.g. if higher entry for AI applicants) - we want all strong students!! So higher entry for everyone... we should take the strongest students where we can - so we should not reject a strong AI applicant whilst taking a weaker CS one...
5. Fashions change - it was machine learning, then data science, now AI....

If we did want to restrict applications to a particular programme then we would need to revise the whole programme, course requirements, etc.”

18.46 Date of Next Teaching Committee Meeting: not to be held in June due to Board of Examiners Meetings. Wed July 4th, 2pm.

18.47 AOCB

18.47-01 Teaching Very Large Classes – G.Bell

A lecturer wished to raise the issue of teaching when the class size is larger than the lecture theatre provided. The options available included the following:

- double teaching – the lecture class is timetabled in two venues at different times and the lecturer teaches the material twice.
- overflow - A second venue is timetabled and the lecture is broadcast into this venue.
- flipped classroom – the learning materials are made available online

It was the opinion of one committee member that while double teaching gave the students the better experience, the workload was detrimental to the lecturer, especially if the course material demanded more than one lecture a week. The overflow system was discussed, and it was reported that interaction with students suffered as the students in the overflow venue cannot ask questions. Another member mentioned that the mobile phone app “Top Hat” could be used to engage those students not in the main venue. The success of flipped classroom teaching rather depended upon the quality and presentation of the online materials, and it was the experience of one member that this system required hundreds of hours of work compared to traditional teaching. It was generally agreed by the committee that the best solution was to have more than one member of staff allocated to a course.

Tutorials for large classes were also discussed. A member declared that Final year courses were problematic because undergraduate students cannot tutor them, limiting the pool of tutors and increasing the lecturer’s workload. Once again it was agreed that proper resource was key in providing a well-run course.

18.47-02 DoT – Teaching Committee Changes

We need to arrange a new schedule - propose alternating “Teaching Lunches” with “Teaching Committee Meetings” and linkage to working groups on key teaching services.

ACTION: Discuss with ITO.