

Institute of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science

SSCC Maths 22nd April 2016 11-10am, SEL, Maths and Physics Building

Present: Catherine Hankin (clh20), Sadie Morris (sam52), Adam Vellender (asv2), Rob Douglas (rsd), Elizabeth Kensler (eak), Joel Greenwood (jsg11), Sian Swain (sls13), Ryan Myles-Roberts (rym12, Chair), Chris Svendsen (chs56), Adil Mughal (aqm), Alan Jones (daj, item 1 only), Tudur Davies (itd), Kieran Quaine (ksq), Rebecca Ord (rlo2)

Apologies: Daria Andreeva (daa), Tom Williams (tmw)

In attendance: Jackie Hedley (qah, Minutes)

Agenda

1. Semester 2 Questionnaires

1.1 daj circulated questionnaire results at the meeting, summary of comments below:

MA110 – data split into Maths & Physics (Physics students found it more difficult); no problems.

MA111 – first time some students may have studied this type of mathematics; good organisation on this module.

MA112 – excellent return, agreed that this module could be made more difficult.

MA113 – difficulty spikes are mainly because it's the first time (for some) studying statistics, but generally no issues.

MP129 – Mixed feedback noted, low percentage of returns. Needs to be monitored further.

MA010 – All fine.

EC109 – (course combined with MA009) Difficulty high to begin with as it is the first time (for many) studying statistics, but otherwise OK.

MA136 – module aimed at both Maths and Economic students. aqm is continuing to change and adapt the content.

MA214 – ok.

MA215 – all seems ok.

MA251 – no issues.

MA256 – students said that module was difficult, but interesting. It was noted that becoming familiar with different notations is an important part of the subject.

MA272 – all ok, apart from a coursework clash. Students like the handouts.

MA275 – all ok, although some were unclear about the requirements of the module at its beginning.

MP257 – all ok, but a little more difficult in 2nd half. The change in assessed work deadlines worked.

MA324 – results shown for MT module only; no problems with the full data.

MA331 – all ok.

MA342 – all fine, students like problem classes.

MA348 – difficult module, but well run.

MA360 – no issues.

MA378 – possibly too easy? Students asked for more questions, and these were provided.

MA380 – possibly too difficult, but then it should not be easy!

MA383 – all ok.

MP357 – all ok.

rym12 thanked daj for compiling the questionnaires this year, and numerous years previously.

He was also thanked for his devoted service to the department, some might even say servitude; daj was the worthy recipient of the SSCC student mug this semester!

2. Minutes of 26.2.2016

The minutes were agreed, with a slight amendment to 3.2.4, to read that 6 lectures on Thursday should have been Tuesday.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Action from 27.10.2015

1. ACTION: A water fountain serving teaching rooms ought to be considered - RSD to ask Simon Cox for an update on progress. **AU senior management now discussing the matter. Simon Cox had reminded IMPACS administration of the issue.**

3.2 Actions from 26.2.2016

Action Number	Minute number	Action	Whose Action
1	3.2.3	Review G103 MMath degree scheme webpages.	RSD – Year 2: Complex Analysis has been inserted as core module. Year 3: Group Theory and Norms have been added to the core.
2	3.2.4	To report to the IMPACS timetabling officer that better spacing of modules would be preferred.	RSD – Timetable Officer will request a more even distribution of lectures.
3	3.3.2	Module Clashes - report the matter to the IMPACS timetabling officer.	RSD – noted by Timetable Officer, and if any issues with travel between campuses, please report.
7	5	Give feedback for students on the Tell Us Now discussion at the SSCC.	FAA4 – response was emailed to members of SSCC (see below)

“Following your SSCC meeting you requested email confirmation of what was discussed in relation to the feedback about Tell Us Now (TUN). Please see below for the issues raised in this meeting and response to the issues:

- You Said We Did (YSWD) actions not coming out of the TUN process
The You Said We Did (YSWD) campaign, while linked to Tell us Now (TUN), was never intended to solely include actions initiated through TUN. YSWD highlights a range of improvements and enhancements that the University has put in place in response to the student voice regardless of the source. This could include SSC’s, individual emails from students to staff or departments, or via the Students Union. While the majority of YSWD’s did come through TUN, some of them came through other feedback mechanisms.
- Issues around AberTemps distributing the surveys were ‘rude’
We recognise there was variation in the delivery of the surveys with the Aber temps. There was a greater focus on training and aiming to deliver a more consistent and professional approach for semester 2 survey periods. We have carried out a programme of quality control and have been asking staff to give us feedback on their delivery and the AberTemps are aware of this process. We will continue to utilise the Aber temps to deliver the surveys as we believe a student led approach is more favourable.
- Over-load of questionnaires when they also fill in-house module surveys
In academia there is always a risk of survey fatigue, while we understand the modular approach increases the number of surveys supplied to students, this is the best way to get in-depth feedback. It is hoped the ‘You said we did’ campaign will provide evidence that the surveys are worthwhile filling in. Moving forward, we will review the amount of surveys supplied to students with the hope to be able to get as much feedback as possible, while still keeping the response quality high.

- Response rates
We survey every student that attends that particular module session. Other survey collection methods elicit lower response rates. We could look at increasing response rates by increasing attendance. “

Following the email response from faa4, and discussions at this meeting, it was felt that there were still concerns regarding the way that the surveys were conducted. For example: some of the Aber Temps were rude, they had a script to read, but could not always be heard; Welsh and English module surveys were initially planned to be conducted on different days, which was disruptive; too many questionnaires; TUN staff were sometimes keen to leave before the lecture start time, therefore not always having a full attendance for survey.

ACTION: These issues will be forwarded on to faa4 by rym12.

4. Student Matters

4.1 Year M

Would appreciate more and bigger whiteboards.

4.2 Year3

4.2.1 Physics A and B: students still unhappy with the temperature in these rooms.

4.2.2 Rooms: A14 is an unpopular room as the seats in the back row move, and the lighting is poor, sometimes flickering. Students are very happy with Biology Main and D5.

4.3 Year 2

4.3.1 Exam Timetabling: Semester 2 exam timetabling is much improved on semester 1. There is a more even spread of exams.

4.3.2 Book lists: Students were asking for more mock questions and direction on where to look for revision purposes. It was suggested that a good starting point would be the ASPIRE book list.

4.3.3 Late entry to class: It was highlighted that late entry to class is happening on a regular basis, and quite often by the same students. It was asked whether this could be mentioned, and suggested that maybe Year Reps could discuss further.

4.3.4 Coursework scheduling: Some students were asking if all coursework could be scheduled before Easter rather than some after. It was noted that the number of teaching weeks after Easter varies from year to year; doing coursework after Easter is just as valuable as revision for exam preparation.

4.4 Year 1

No matters to report.

4.5 Year 0

No matters to report.

4.6 MathsSoc

End of Year meal: this will be attended by 58 members.

4.7 Welsh Medium

Registration problems: tmw was absent, but asked itd to mention that there were problems with registration onto some year 4 modules, but has now been resolved with the involvement of AQRO.

5. Employability

Employability is now a standing item on the SSCC agenda.

Kim Kenobi had nothing new to raise at this meeting, but the feedback from students was that there had been a marked increase in the amount of employability material recently, which has been gratefully received.

It was mentioned that the career planning module that is taken in the 1st year, would possibly be more relevant in the 3rd year. It could include material on how to prepare for interviews, possibly practice interviews organised via Careers, and further build confidence.

aqm is currently administering the Maths Facebook page, and suggested that he could include dates and times of employability events on there. Student representatives thought this was a good idea, as most people view Facebook regularly.

ACTION: aqm to collect information from Kim Kenobi to include on Facebook page.

Students have asked whether it would be possible to have more advice and guidance on applying for further study and more details of staff research interests. rsd stated that there have been such sessions in the past, and they could be reinstated in the future.

6. Staff Matters

6.1 Helpdesk: the Helpdesk is currently not used to its full potential, so rsd asked student representatives for suggestions on how it could be modified to make it more popular.

rym12 suggested that one 2 hour slot, rather than 2 x 1 hour slots, in a room other than the Library, could be less formal, and therefore more appealing to students.

Another suggestion would be book a slot through the Facebook page, but it was agreed that this was not the best solution to the problem. 1st year reps were asked if there was a reason why their use of the Helpdesk was so infrequent, but they could not give a specific reason.

6.2 Printers: rsd reported to the student representatives that as a result of one photocopier being removed from the department, and the other one being quite unreliable, that sometimes there may be delays in printing material. rsd asked for students to support the battle to obtain another photocopier!

It was discussed whether students actually need a hard copy of everything, but the general consensus was that they do prefer a paper copy.

eak was asked if she knew why the printer was removed and responded by saying that distribution is based on usage in departments across AU, but she will raise the point with IS. (See IS report under section 7 – below.)

6.3 Library Photocopier: The issue of the Library photocopier running out of paper was raised, as only a member of IS staff can replenish it. A response to this has also been made in the IS report in section 7.

6.4 Wi-Fi coverage in Library: there have been ongoing issues with connectivity in the Library area; again these have been addressed in the IS report below. EAK stressed that students should be connecting to Eduroam and not to the Cloud, as they will not be able to access student electronic resources.

6.5 Student Reps: rsd thanked all the student representatives for their valuable input and participation during the course of this academic year.

6.6 Student Lead Teaching Awards: Congratulations to Rob, Adam, Rolf and Daniel who have been nominated for an award. Good luck!

6.7 Foundation Year Funding: Foundation year funding may possibly be withdrawn by the Welsh Assembly Government in the future, and channelled through HE colleges as an alternative. It is felt that the positives of studying a Foundation year are much better than the route through HE. jsg11 noted that the university environment was better for mature students. rsd asked if foundation year students would mind completing a short survey at the next tutorial, at the request of AU management.

ACTION: Yuan Shen (yus10) to distribute survey questionnaires.

7. IS Report

EAK gave a brief outline of notes from IS, and has since emailed a more detailed report, listed below:

1. Simon French will be returning as Subject Librarian for Maths (and Physics and CompSci) on 1 June 2016.
2. In response to student feedback more power points were added to Hugh Owen Library in March
3. If a book is being borrowed by someone else, you can easily and quickly reserve it for yourself <https://faqs.aber.ac.uk/814> to be returned more quickly back to your library of choice to pick up.
4. In order to get full access to e-resources and services, ensure that you are connected to wifi on campus via Eduroam not The Cloud which is a visitor wireless service.

5. For students coming back next year: Changes to Primo, the library catalogue, see blogpost for details: <http://aberssel.blogspot.co.uk/2016/04/may-31st-new-design-for-primo-and.html>
6. Please follow Information Services on Twitter aberuni_is and FB aberuni.is to get info on all new services and to hear of downtimes / services unavailable as soon as we are aware of them.
7. AberLearn Blackboard Unavailable: 1st – 5th July 2016 for maintenance.
8. During the May exam period you need your Aber Card to swipe in AND out of the Hugh Owen Library at all times in order to ensure study spaces for Aber card holders. Visitors to the library should contact us in advance to arrange access during this period.
9. A reminder: no hot food to be eaten in any of our libraries. In response to feedback from library users and in order to maintain a pleasant study environment for all, hot food cannot be brought into or consumed in any of our libraries. Hot or cold drinks (with lids) are now allowed throughout the libraries The full policy is at: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/regulations/fooddrink>
10. Summer IT projects Hefin: Planning now, with installation happening throughout summer for all projects. (Subject to Clearing, Hols, etc)
 - PSBA Upgrade new internet feeds - going from 2*1Gbps to 2*4Gbps Core upgrade - replacing kit, and 40Gbps core links, and expanding 10Gbps infrastructure. Across the University.
 - WIFI upgrade - replacing older ABG kit with latest generation 11ac AP's. Across all campuses with older access points.
 - PSV - new Windows 10 image.
 - Panopto, Blackboard updates

Further to the IS report, EAK has given an update to the following issues:

1. Printer on Level 2 keeps breaking down. 2 printers needed on Level 2 – unhappiness noted that the 2nd printer having been removed by IS is causing problems and delays.
I noted in the meeting that since the introduction of on-line assignment submission the demand for printing has significantly reduced across the University. The numbers of printers we lease is based on a level of demand for each. We wouldn't be able to lease or purchase additional printers without having to increase the printing charges to students.
Please can you let me know what the problem is with the printer that it keeps breaking down?

[Update as of today 03/05/2016 - Konica are attending today to resolve this.](#)

2. Students noted that library printer is often out of paper.
Could you let me know who I should arrange to have a key for the library printer so that dept staff can refill the library printer themselves as needed though IS will continue to replace paper and toner etc.

ACTION: SSCC need to inform IS of the appropriate person to hold the key.

3. Wifi in Physics library seems patchy. Can we review coverage.
I have asked by colleague to review coverage and will report back to you.

ACTION: eak to report back on WiFi coverage.

4. I had reported that A14 is an unpopular room from a student perspective. Seats move at the back and lights flicker (different ones each time).
Update as of today 03/05/2016: My colleague will raise a job with Estates to reinstall any loose chairs in A14 over the summer.

Action Number	Minute number	Action	Whose Action
1	3.2	Further TUN feedback to be relayed back to FAA4	RYM12
2	5	Employability information to be collected from Kim Kenobi to present on Facebook page.	AQM
3	6.7	Foundation year surveys to be distributed to students	YUS10
4	7	EAK to be informed as to where a key could be held for library photocopier	RSD
5	7	WiFi coverage to be checked in PS Library	EAK