

INSTITUTE OF MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE: MATHEMATICS STUDENT-STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday 3rd December 2014, 1-10pm, room 231, Physical Sciences Building

PRESENT: Alexander Cooney (Yr1), Spencer Ncube (Yr1,SN), Chelsea Coulson-Williams (Yr2), Daniel Brookes(Yr2), Damien Clarke(Yr3, Chair), Jennifer O'Neil (Yr3,JO), Ryan Myles-Roberts (Maths Soc), Leslie Mear (YrM), Daria Andreeva (PG), Rob Douglas (RD), Adam Vellender (AV), David Binding (DB), Tudur Davies (TD), Alan Jones (AJ)

APOLOGIES: Sian Swain(Yr1,SS, sent comments), Sahm Nikoi (SKN)

IN ATTENDANCE: Myfanwy Cowdy (Minutes)

1. MINUTES OF 29/10/14

An update to the last set of minutes was noted – the Maths Society e-mail address is listed on the Students' Union Website.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Action points from last meeting:

3(a) RD had emailed (and spoken to) Rolf Gohm regarding MA 326 Topology;

3(b) Trystan Pugh is currently investigating how to add to Maths degree lists manually;

3(c) Daniel Burgarth agreed with the comment that the compulsory modules were too time consuming and had raised the issue;

4 Planning/organisation of talks by professionals in industry underway;

6 SKN had sent an e-mail reminding students to activate their cards together with instructions on how to do this;

8 Lecturers had been reminded to send model solutions to the Help Desk Co-ordinator.

ROOM 320, PSB

AJ confirmed that room 320 had been withdrawn from the timetable on Health & Safety grounds.

3 STUDENT MATTERS

Year M

It was mentioned that someone had been hit on the head by an exposed conduit on level 4, PSB.

Year 3

Rolf Gohm had adapted well to a room with new technology.

General contentment with exam timetable. One change will be needed: MT341 and MA341 (Welsh and English versions of the same paper) had been timetabled with a one week gap.

Exam timetable issues for other years.

MA10020 has two exams: the one marked (A) on the timetable is for Algebra, (B) for Calculus.

ACTION: DB would send an e-mail to confirm MA10020 exam arrangements.

The final exam timetable should be released before the end of term.

Efforts made by lecturers, to adapt their teaching styles to the (somewhat limited) facilities available in renovated rooms, were appreciated.

Year 2

RStudio not available on some computers. AV noted that adding this was on the Computing team to do list.

There was some discussion of availability of past exam paper model solutions. In Real Analysis, one set was handed out, and others could be earned by submitting attempts; some thought it would be difficult to complete attempts by the end of term (12/12), but later efforts could be emailed to RD.

It was queried if more use of "lecture capture" would be desirable. Plusses and minuses were discussed: in the latter category, it was noted that attendance can drop when online notes are available.

Year 1

Assignment deadlines were still seen as close together with some having deadlines on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays. Dynamics seemed to be the issue: being owned by Physics, it is not paired in the way Maths owned modules are; students could be unlucky therefore with the timing of assignments.

SS reported that there had only been time for one help desk session before the Geometry assignment was due and that 2 sessions would have been better. This was a consequence of a shuffling of course materials: RD had asked Simon Cox not to run a Geometry tutorial on the last day of term.

SS passed on the view that the help desk had not been that useful for some topics. It was noted that the help desk is for helpful hints and not allowed to give full answers on assessed work. Greater numbers had attended the help desk; this was welcomed.

Postgrads

No issues.

Maths Soc

Maths Soc were considering an end of academic year meal rather than a barbecue for this session.

4 STAFF MATTERS

The Christmas Dinner run by Maths Soc was hailed a great success. Staff said that it had been well organised.

Arrangements for a Careers event in February were in hand.

UG marked Scripts

RD reminded representatives that students should collect marked scripts from pigeon holes. Regular checking of pigeon holes was needed by all years so that they could receive feedback as soon as possible. JO remarked that if a student had a note taker, then the notes would be left in the pigeon holes.

ACTION: RD to send a reminder e-mail to all undergraduates.

The possibility of moving the pigeon holes was discussed; with room 320 not in use, fewer students use this floor.

Mobile phone usage

The inappropriate use of mobile phones in lectures and tutorials was discussed. AV asked students how they would feel about bringing in a policy of not using mobiles in lectures. It was seen as a good idea. Laptops and tablets could still be used to download documents.

ACTION: It was agreed that a ban of mobile phones for a term would be trialled in some modules.

Library Opening hours

Staff would like the PSB library (respectively) open and closed when the building (respectively) opens and closes. Swipe cards should give all day access. The restrictions on Library opening hours might be due to financial constraints.

Yr 1 Tutorial attendance

The attendance at tutorials had dropped significantly.

ACTION: RD asked the student representatives to mention it to all Year 1 students

RD reminded representatives of the marks that are given for attending tutorials. Students should be aware of this as they are told at the beginning of each course.

5. Semester 1 Questionnaires

RD thanked AJ and Trystan Pugh for the quick processing of the questionnaires.

The 1st year feedback scores were lower than expected. The resource (tutorials, marked work) is available but perhaps the students do not interpret feedback as other years do.

The Maths subject group had changed the questionnaire to include Maths or Physics student tick boxes but not all had ticked the boxes.

The low percentage of returned questionnaires for MA100 was possibly due to poor attendance at a 9am lecture.

The student representatives noted that 1st year students might find the 2nd semester difficult if they had missed a few lectures.

The MA 203 questionnaire return rate was low. The student representatives reported that it was possibly due to it being the only lecture on a Wednesday or it being in room C22. The low mark for presentation could be attributed to technical difficulties with equipment.

MP26020 is perceived as difficult; this may be a view primarily of Physics students.

The response rate for 3rd year questionnaires seemed higher this year except for MA30110 Group Theory.

6. A.O.B

Attendance Monitoring

SN reported issues with attendance monitoring. Some students had been marked absent from lectures when they had attended.

DB had received e-mails regarding this and had gone back to correct the registers. In large groups inputted data might not always be 100% accurate.

Some students would e-mail if they were going to be absent; these e-mails are taken into consideration, however staff were not permitted to use the accepted excuse response on SAMS due to IMPACS policy. Initials on a register are not counted and marked as absent. This is mainly for the purposes of monitoring Tier 4 students where a signature is needed as the Home office won't accept anything else.

The meeting ended at 2.10pm. The next meeting will be in Week 5 of Semester 2.