

Institute of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science

SSCC Maths 27th October 2015 11:10 SEL, room 231, Maths and Physics Building

Present: Tudur Davies (ITD), Rob Douglas (RSD), Alan Jones (DAJ), Adam Vellender (ASV), Daria Andreeva (DAA), Adil Mughal (AQM), Ryan Myles-Roberts (RYM, Chair), Sian Swain (SLS), Kieran Quaine (KSQ), Michael Oluwafunmilade (MIO), Tom Williams (TMW), Cathy Hankin (CLH), Sadie Morris (SAM), Joel Greenwood (JSG), Simon French (SIF), Miranda Capecchi (MLH, Minutes)

Apologies: Rebekah Ord, Chris Svendsen, Spencer Ncube

Agenda

1. Composition of SSCC. Should the HoD be on the Committee?

Greetings and introductions were exchanged and students were asked if they wished for SXC to serve on the committee; the general consensus was that students were happy to extend an invitation but didn't want SXC to feel obliged to attend. Those who had been on the committee in previous years felt it had run perfectly well without the Head of Department present.

2. Election of the SSCC Chair (*RSD to Chair meeting until the end of this item and then the elected Chair to take over from 3 onwards*).

RYM had registered an interest in undertaking the duty of Chair and it was unanimously agreed that he should take up this position.

3. Minutes of 23/04/15

Agreed.

4. Matters arising from the minutes of 23/04/2015

4.1. Both actions were completed.

4.2. Employability contact: this is now Kim Kenobi and students can contact him directly.

4.3. It was noted (last meeting, 5.3) that lecture attendance for Year 1 was quite low. Regarding this year it is too early at present to tell, though Mathematics is keeping track of it.

5. Student matters (*Years M,3,2,1,0, Postgraduate, Maths Soc. – in this order so that less experienced representatives can observe veterans first*).

5.1. Year M: It would be appreciated if lecturers reminded Year 1 students to use the Help Desk.

5.2.1. Year 3: Assignments: some students had five assignments due in one week, one the next. Module twinning arrangements were mostly working; it was possible some students were only taking one of a pair. Alternation of assignments in Statistics may have broken down.

1. ACTION: RSD to investigate twinning arrangements in the Statistics modules MA36510 and MA37210.

5.2.2. Geometry of Complex Numbers (MA30510): the IBERS seminar room 0.33 being used for lectures in this course is not fit for this purpose, given the number of students and given the fact that it is actually a seminar room (with desks arranged accordingly). This needs to be addressed with timetabling for next semester.

5.2.3. Books: there are not enough copies of the book 'A Course in Group Theory (J.F. Humphreys)' in the library for module MA30110; the lecturer is following the book closely.

2. ACTION: SIF to investigate this matter.

5.2.4. Water fountain: students asked if there could be one provided in the Physical Sciences Building.

3. ACTION: Maths to make enquiries.

5.2.5. Teaching through the medium of Welsh, module MT39020: as students will now be applying for teacher training, could Maths consider making writing a personal statement a module task?

4. ACTION: ITD to consider this.

5.2.6. Card scanner in Physics A: one of the card scanners in Physics A doesn't seem to be working properly for most students. Lecturers would be happy to bring paper copies of registers as a back up.

5. ACTION: MLH to speak to CJP concerning any possible problems with this scanner.

5.3.1. Year 2: most students are happy, but there is an issue with Mathematical Physics (MP26020) and the lecturing methods of Dr Rudi Winter (RUW); some students are not finding the course engaging; the lectures seem aimed more at Physics students than Maths. Students suggested that a Maths and a Physics demonstrator be present during workshops. Further, some students felt that the arrangements for the group assessments weren't fair. Representatives from higher years (with previous experience of this course) concurred with these comments.

6. ACTION: Maths staff to discuss MP26020 at next subject group.

Comments from staff:

- The maths topics will be covered in far greater depth in later courses. In the short term, students could form a "help group" for Thursday's test; MMath students running the Help Desk might be able to attend, indeed any students used to RUW's notation could contribute.
- The second half of the course used to be given by David Binding, comprising basic methods of vector calculus approached from a mathematical viewpoint. Representatives from higher years noted this half of the course was easier to follow. Edwin Flikkema is likely to use this style and content.
- With regards to the complaints that the course is not engaging, these are noted.

5.3.2. Real Analysis: some students would like more notes/summary on BlackBoard, also Panopto might be useful.

Comments:

RSD would like students to take ownership of their own notes, as they need to practice writing, re-reading and correcting; online notes cover important definitions and theorems so students have correct versions. Further, the course is the problem sheets, so students should be encouraged to concentrate on these and extra examples provided on Blackboard. People are also welcome to see RSD to ask him questions. There are summary files for Real Analysis on Blackboard.

With regards to recording lectures, Panopto won't be used this session, but students are more than welcome to use their own recording devices to record the lecture. RSD does make some videos and the general consensus is that these are most helpful.

5.4. Year 1: nothing to report.

5.5.1. Year 0: everyone seems happy thus far.

5.5.2. Attendance: there seems to be an issue with Year 0 attendance and the representative will investigate why this is so.

5.6. Postgraduates: nothing to report.

5.7.1. MathsSoc.: the IMA conference is coming up and the society would welcome more people coming to the 2 hour study group, which is open to all years.

5.7.2. The MathsSoc Christmas meal has been booked for December 3rd. Staff offered to forward any emails MathsSoc wish to send to all students.

6. National Student Survey (NSS)

6.1. The survey will be available from January onwards; staff wish to remind students of the importance of completing this. Last year 70% of Maths students filled it out, which is a respectable number. The outcome of the survey was generally positive, but Maths dropped in overall contentment – why this was so is uncertain. When filling out the survey, students should be aware of how the summary statistics are prepared from their responses.

6.2. The matter of MP26020 has been reported via Tell US Now, but it is also important for students to bring their issues to this Committee.

7. Staff matters

7.1. Welsh medium representative: it was suggested that the committee should have a Welsh medium representative and TMW agreed to take up this position.

7.2. Room 320, Maths and Physics Building: this is used sporadically, so Maths students could use it for group sessions. MMath students suggested they would like an office where they could have a base and 320 could be used for this. 319 and 321 are also possible to use for group study, but not on a Monday or Friday due to tutorials.

7. ACTION: DAJ will investigate how to book room 320.

7.3. Electronic attendance system: some students have raised issues with it; some cards are not recognised and may need to be validated, but also students forget to bring their cards.

7.4. MP12910: What do students think about the Excel and Python content in this module? The general consensus is that both are useful, but more time is needed to explain Python. Excel is useful when it comes to employability. Students had found the teaching of the R statistics package well paced.

8. A.O.B.

The library is not always as quiet as it should be, even when a member of staff was present, and an incident of too much noise was reported on the afternoon of Monday 26th October.

8. ACTION: SIF to investigate and report.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 1st December 2015

List of actions from this meeting of the 27th October 2015:

- 1. ACTION: RSD to investigate the twinning arrangements in the Statistics modules MA36510 and MA37210.**
- 2. ACTION: SIF to investigate this matter.**
- 3. ACTION: Maths to make enquiries.**
- 4. ACTION: ITD to consider this.**
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