

Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences

Mathematics Student-Staff Consultative Committee

Thursday 6th December 2018, 12:30pm in MP 3.05, Physical Sciences Building

Present: Rob Douglas (RSD, Director of L&T Maths), Adam Vellender (ASV2, Year 1 tutor), Chris Svendsen (Chair, Year 4 Rep), Panna Karlinger (Year 3 Rep), Kim Kenobi (Year 3 tutor), Tudur Davies (ITD, Year 4 tutor), Tirion Roberts (PG Rep), Anwen Thomas (Welsh Medium Rep), Morwenna Jeffery (MRJ11, Careers), Yuan Shen (YUS10, Year 0 tutor and Employability), Daniel Skerman (Year 1 Rep), Amy Major (MathsSoc), Baylee Paige Schütte (Year 2 Rep), Georgie Massen (Year 2 Rep), Simon French (SIF37, Library), Joel Greenwood (Year 3 Rep), Adil Mughal (Year 2 Tutor).

In attendance: Michelle Symes (MIS37, Minutes).

Apologies: Cameron Wilcox (Year 4 Rep), James Owen (Year 3 Rep).

Agenda

10. **Minutes of 8th November 2018**

The minutes were accepted.

11. **Matters arising**

Action Number	Minute Number	Action	Whose Action	Action Status
1	4	Speak to Daniel Peck regarding technology required for lecture capture.	rsd	Action complete.
2	4	Adam Vellender to report these observations to IS.	asv2	Action on-going.
3	4	Speak to the lecturers concerned about twinned Level M modules.	rsd	Action complete. Daniel Peck has moved the Integral Equations assignment deadline to mid-week.
4	4	A series of Minor Project presentations to be arranged before the Christmas break as practice for Year 4 Major Project presentations.	itd	Action complete.
5	4	Contact Module Co-ordinators	rsd	Action complete. Requests

		regarding making more Blackboard materials permanently available.		should be made directly to individual module co-ordinators.
6	4	Advertise the IMA event on the foyer screen once details have been passed to him by MathsSoc.	yus10	Action complete.
7	6	Yuan Shen to organise, via Careers, a LinkedIn session for Semester 2.	yus10	Action complete – Central event advertised and Maths only event to be held in Semester 2.
8	7	Request more plug sockets for the PSB library.	sif4	Action complete in part but issue is on-going.

12. Matters Arising

Rob Douglas confirmed that Simon Cox continues to advocate on behalf of Maths students regarding the need for a “Community space” in the Physical Sciences Building.

13. Student Matters

TUN: Rob Douglas confirmed 3 TUN notices had been received:

- A request for a water fountain in the Departmental Library. This was not considered appropriate due to the presence of many books and the fact that there is (as a result of a previous SSCC request) a water fountain in the foyer.

Request declined.

- A request for no hand-in dates on Wednesdays to allow students taking up sports to participate in away fixtures.

Request declined, as being able to organise competing priorities is a valuable life skill that students learn at University; also there is a trade off with fewer activities on Wednesdays meaning a more congested timetable (and the possibility of several consecutive teaching sessions).

- The third matter was not for general discussion in an open meeting.

Year 4/M:

Nothing to report except contentment.

Year 3:

- Students are unhappy about the final exam timetable with the exams now taking place over 9 days (plus 2 Saturdays) compared with 10 days (plus two Saturdays) in the draft timetable. Rob Douglas explained that these changes were reported by the Timetabling Office as unavoidable, and the impact limited to a small number of Year 3 students and was the best fit within existing constraints. This matter had also been reported via TUN and directly to the Faculty Registry Admin Manager ahead of this meeting.

Action 1: Rob Douglas to write to the Timetabling Office reminding them of the students’ preferred option of spreading the Year 3 exams across the whole exam period, instead of bunching them up, to allow maximum time between papers.

- MP35610 Quantum Information – there was some concerns regarding teaching style (with some important comments being verbal only) and lots of cancelled sessions. Some assignment problems were perceived as trick questions.

Rob Douglas explained that there had been compelling personal circumstances that resulted in this module being disrupted this semester. The mathematical content of this module is on the low side for year 3; the difficulty arises from understanding the concepts.

- MA33310 Integral Transforms – a whole lecture was lost due to whiteboard pens not working or not being available. It was noted by staff that there was a period of time when black marker pens were rather scarce.
- MA32610 Topology and MA30110 Group Theory. Requests from students for the lecturer to give more detail/explanation of difficult concepts.

Year 2:

- MA26610 Applied Statistics – a request for clearer marking criteria for assignments in this module received. Adam Vellender noted that detailed examples had been given: it was felt that these represented sufficient information for students.
- Marking – some students reported that they were not happy with the depth or richness of assignment feedback received. This was not the experience of the year 2 representatives. It was noted that lecturers had offered/encouraged students to meet them for further explanations, yet these offers were not taken up.

Students are at every opportunity encouraged to speak directly to the lecturer.

- MA/MT20110 Real Analysis – can the mark for formative assessment sheets be given as x out of y rather than x? Rob Douglas noted that model solutions already listed marks per question, and calculating the total mark was simply adding those numbers together. Students should not be put off submitting solutions merely because they failed to get close to full marks.

Action 2: Rob Douglas will state total marks at the end of model solutions.

- MP/FG26020 Mathematical Physics – feels like the 2nd part is not as well organised as the first part especially regarding lecture delivery and methods of distributing information. Some students are struggling to follow the class. Furthermore the tablet notes are not uploaded to Blackboard and it is difficult to follow the lecture again on Panopto. This issue was raised last year: it was noted that the lecturer, for reasons of teaching style, declined to upload this data to Blackboard.
- Timetabling on Wednesdays – next semester the draft timetable indicates lectures 9am to 11am on Wednesday mornings making away fixtures, for those involved in sports, difficult. Refer to TUN point 2 above.
- It was confirmed again that HD cameras in lecture rooms would be very useful, especially regarding capturing writing on whiteboards. Refer to action point 2.4 above. Staff were in agreement.

Year 1:

No issues raised.

Year 0:

No issues raised.

Welsh Medium:

No issues raised.

MathsSoc:

No issues raised but a reminder that the deadline for expressing interest in the Christmas meal is tomorrow.

Post Graduate:

No issues raised.

14. Surveys

MEQ: Summaries of MEQ feedback responses to a selection of key questions were distributed. Specific mention was made of:

- MA02610 – not popular with the (larger) Physics cohort due to the number of Economics examples, but that problem will disappear next year when there is no twinned MA12610 module;
- MA/MT10310 Probability – considered one of the hardest modules;
- MP/MT10610 Calculus – Views expressed by Maths and Physics students were similar;
- PM/FG14010 Dynamics – poor response rate: 60/154;
- MA26010 Distributions and Estimation – few returns (17/45), paper questionnaires better at 24/45. Attendance for this module could have been better;
- MA30110 Group Theory and MA32610 Topology – disappointing number of returns;
- Integral Transforms/Equations (MA33310 and MAM3320) – level M happier than level 3 students. It was felt that the Complex Analysis recap was too long, and that the lecture notes would benefit from more structure. Those students who were also taking Partial Differential Equations found the module easier; those at level M who took Control Theory (which makes use of transforms) had an advantage;
- Only 6/14 returns received for MA/MTM9720 Minor Project. When prompted students noted it was helpful to be advised in advance if supervisors were not available.

Departmental paper questionnaires: Kim Kenobi was thanked for his collation and graphical representations of feedback submitted via the Departmental questionnaires. More returns received than for the MEQ. Splendid results for some level 3 modules. Specific mention was made of:

- MA32610/MAM2620 Topology/Algebraic Topology – level M happier than level 3;
- MA26010 Distributions and Estimation, a mixed bag in terms of Presentation;
- MA33310/MAM3320 Integral Transforms/Equations – something went wrong with the survey, there should have been more returns and a separation of level 3 and M results;
- MA30510 Geometry of Complex Numbers – rooms considered a problem: MP3.02 is stuffy at times, and in MP3.05 the whiteboard is too high and narrow, insufficient decent chalk available to use the blackboard;
- MT39020 – no MEQ survey due to problems of ensuring anonymity.

NSS:

The NSS Champions meeting held 5/12 confirmed the following key dates:

- NSS survey opens on 28th January;
- University events will start on 25th January;
- Email to (eligible) finalists is due out 24th January;

All finalists are encouraged to participate in the NSS. Completion of the NSS survey by the end of February enables students to enter a prize draw and possibly win one of the 100 X £10 gift vouchers. The

Departmental event will be a coffee and cake meeting, taking place sometime in the first two weeks of semester 2 teaching.

Rob Douglas requested that the Student Representatives act as Ambassadors for the NSS and encourage finalists to complete the survey.

15. **Employability**

Morwenna Jeffery reminded SSCC representatives that she holds CV/employability drop in sessions every Thursday in Computer Science reception. It was felt it would be helpful to split these sessions between the Physical Sciences Building and Llandinam. Students requested that a reminder be posted to the TV monitor in the foyer.

Action: Morwenna Jeffery to split the drop in sessions between PSB and Llandinam and advertise these via email, with YUS10 to organise a reminder on the TV monitor in the foyer.

16. **Staff Matters**

Library: Simon French confirmed the shutdown over Christmas for all IS libraries as 21st December to 2nd January. He then wished everyone a great Christmas.

17. **AOB**

Tudur Davies noted more MMath presenters would be welcome as he had only 2 confirmed so far.

18. **Actions carried forward:**

Action Number	Minute Number	Action	Whose Action	Action Status
2	4	Adam Vellender to report these observations to IS.	asv2	
13	1	Write to the Timetabling Office reminding them of the students' preferred option of spreading the Year 3 exams across the whole exam period, instead of bunching them up, to allow maximum time between papers.	rsd	
13	2	State total marks at the end of model solutions.	rsd	
15		Morwenna Jeffery to split the drop in sessions between PSB and Llandinam and advertise these via email and YUS10 to organise a reminder on the TV monitor in the foyer.	mrj11/yus10	

Meeting closed.

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