



**MINUTES OF THE MATHEMATICS UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE
(MUAC)**

**Thursday 13 August 2015, 2:15pm
Munro Room, Queens' College**

Present: Julia Gog (JG), Ross Lawther (RL), Nigel Peake (Chair) (NP), Paul Russell (PR), Stephen Siklos (SS).
John Lister (JL) and Pelham Wilson (PW) attended by invitation for item 1.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Margaret Duff, Tom Harris, Julia Hawkins and Stuart Martin.

2. Pre-admissions testing

The main item of business was to consider the current state of discussions between Mathematics (led by Julia Gog) and the University concerning proposals to introduce pre-interview testing across all subjects. Although the situation was still in a state of flux, it is clear that key points in the Mathematics response to the proposals will be the demonstration of the consistency of the approach to admissions between Colleges, and the transparency of the process from the point of view of the candidates. MUAC discussed these issues at great length, and agreed that Mathematics admissions is presently conducted with a great deal of care, with considerable consistency between colleges in the qualities which are being looked for in successful candidates, and with effective use of the Pool. The crucial point is that Mathematics, unlike any other subject in the University, uses performance in the STEP examinations as one of the principal selection criteria, with typically as many as two conditional offers being made per place available on the basis of the interviews (as compared to about one offer per place in other subjects). Even so, MUAC believes that some improvements could be made, especially in the information the Faculty provides to potential applicants, and agreed to recommend the following points of action:

- a) Make it clearer that all Colleges make offers based on STEP papers 2 and 3, and that conditional offers will normally be 1,1.
- b) Publish an agreed description of the qualities that Colleges are looking for in successful candidates.
- c) To replace the rather confusing, and often out-of-date, list of the admissions requirements of each separate College on the Faculty website with a more general statement.
- d) To encourage all Mathematics interviewers to adopt the good practice of providing clear reports for candidates going into the Pool, to include some (very brief) outline of the mathematical questions they were asked at interview.

MUAC also resolved that, in order to present a full and agreed response to the University's proposals early in Michaelmas (as requested by the Senior Tutors' committee), an extraordinary meeting of the Mathematics Directors of Studies should be convened, possibly on 12th or 13th October 2015. NP would liaise with the College convening the Director of Studies meeting for 2015/16 (Kings), and JG agreed to lead a discussion of the issues at the meeting.

ACTION: NP & JG

3. Admissions Open Days

It was agreed that the Mathematics Faculty Open Days should be held on 30 April and 7 May 2016. The question of whether to hold the events in LMH or in CMS was under discussion. NP to liaise with Orsola Spivack, who had agreed to organise the events.

ACTION: NP & Orsola Spivack

4. Membership of MUAC

It was agreed to make the following recommendations to the Faculty Board:

- To extend the tenure of Tom Harris, one of the junior members, by 12 months to 30/9/16
- To extend the tenure of the two co-opted members Stephen Siklos and Julia Hawkins by 2 years to 30/9/17.
- To extend the tenure of Nigel Peake by 12 months to 30/9/16.
- To seek a new member appointed by the Directors of Studies, to replace Paul Russell.

It was also noted that if the Faculty Board were to agree the appointment of Dr Orsola Spivack to be Faculty Admission Officer then she would serve on MUAC ex officio.

ACTION: NP

5. Issue for further discussion

The important question of the distinction between outreach, recruitment and admissions, and the way in which the Faculty tackles all these issues, was raised. Since time did not allow a proper discussion at this meeting, it was agreed that MUAC would return to this matter at the earliest opportunity.

The meeting closed at 5.30pm.