

Consultative Committee for Mathematics in the Natural Sciences

DRAFT Minutes of a meeting held on

Monday 16th May 2011 at 4.00 p.m.,

in Meeting Room 11, Centre for Mathematical Sciences, Clarkson Road

Present: Dr Ben Allanach, Dr Robert Best, Dr Sue Colwell (Convenor), Dr Harvey Reall, Miss Sara Dalton, Miss Olivia Skilbeck, Mr Ethan Shapera.

Apologies: Dr Mark Spivack, Prof. Steve Gull.

1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

2. Part IA, A course: Miss Dalton reported

Lecture Course: Dr Jardine-Wright.

As last term, Miss Dalton had circulated a questionnaire, and this time had received thirty nine responses. Her summary of the results of the questionnaire is attached.

The students think the teaching is good to excellent, the lecturer is really methodical, audible and legible, and the pace is comfortable. The handout is very good, but it is not complete which can cause problems if supervisions go faster than the lectures. Some of the students feel that the lecturer spends too long doing problems rather than explaining proofs. The atmosphere in the lectures is good, and attendance is good, even on Saturdays when the room seems as full as on other days. The examples sheets have an appropriate range of questions of different levels of difficulty although some students would like to see more questions about proofs. The examples sheets suggest the use of MatLab, but the students are, in general, not confident enough with MatLab to try to use it.

3. Part IA, B course: Miss Skilbeck reported.

Lecture Course: Professor Papaloizou.

The students like the lecturer and find him easy to hear and to follow, although his handwriting can be difficult to read, especially when there are a lot of subscripts. The lecture notes are good, but they are incomplete which makes them difficult to use for people who don't attend the lectures. The students also find them hard to dip in to, and they would appreciate a clearer layout. Initially the lecture room was not as full as last term, but attendance has increased during the term. There was a comment that those doing physics had seen partial differential equations before they were covered in the maths course. The senior members of the committee responded that the syllabus committee did try to make sure the material was in an appropriate order for all the science subjects, but that it was impossible to satisfy everyone's requirements. The examples sheets were felt to be appropriate, but some students would have liked more questions on partial differential equations, and more revision questions.

5. Part IB course: Mr Shapera reported.

Lecture course: Professor Green

The students have been uniformly positive about the lecturer and they would be interested in hearing more about his research. They find that he explains things well and goes at a good pace, and people are still keeping up with the material. The lecture notes are comprehensive, and the overheads the lecturer shows are a condensed version of the notes. Attendance has been constant with an estimated 90 people, and the majority have been satisfied with their choice of maths for this year. The examples sheets are at about the right level. The first examples class had been postponed, and had not been held by the time of the meeting so no comments were possible.

6. Any other business.

Both the IA and IB representatives confirmed that the book by Riley, Hobson and Bence remains very useful, and said that most people use library copies.

The convenor thanked the student representatives for their efforts throughout the year.