

Annual Report of the Teaching Committee

May, 2004

1. The Teaching Committee is required by its terms of reference to provide an annual report to the Faculty Board in the Easter Term.
2. The members of the Teaching Committee are currently

Prof T Fokas	Dr T W Körner
Dr I Leader (Chair of Curriculum Committee)	Dr J R Lister
Dr G Paternain	Dr S T C Siklos (Chair)
Dr R M Williams	
Ms L J Colwell (Junior Member, Trinity, Part III)	
Mr C R Gibbs (Junior Member, Christs, Part II)	

Junior members are nominated by the Chair of the Committee and appointed by the Faculty Board. Recent practice has been to seek expressions of interest by means of an e-mail to all Part IB students before the beginning of the academical year, and to invite the Junior Member at the end of his or her first year of service to serve for an additional year, so that there is a Part IB representative and a Part II representative.

3. We met a total of 6 times in the 2003/04, four times in the Michaelmas term, once in the Lent term and once in the Easter term. As usual, the major items on the agenda were the Tripos examinations and the paper and e-mail questionnaires.
4. We provided a detailed response to the reports of the Examiners and the External Examiners which was used as the basis of the Faculty Board's response to the Education Committee of the General Board. This report was considered by the Board at its November meeting.
5. Each year, shortly after the Tripos examinations, an e-mail questionnaire is sent to all undergraduates. This timing and nature of this questionnaire mean that it provides information that is not available from the paper questionnaires distributed by the lecturers at the end of their courses: students' views on the examinations; information from students who did not stay until the end of the lecture course; comparative information between courses. We considered the response to the e-mail questionnaire in conjunction with the data provided by the Faculty Office from the paper questionnaires. From all this information (together with examination data and statistics), we form judgements on the overall undergraduate programme. Broadly speaking, courses are badly received either because they are inappropriate in some way (which may concern prerequisite courses), or because the lecturer has presented them badly (or for a combination of these reasons). In the former case, we liaise with the Curriculum Committee and in the latter case we liaise with the Heads of Department who are responsible for the provision of teaching in their departments.

This year, we considered the e-mail questionnaires in the Easter term instead of the Michaelmas term (as is our usual practice) because leave of absence of the relevant computer officer meant that the questionnaires were not analysed until the Lent term. In addition, our discussion was somewhat curtailed by the discovery halfway through the meeting that two committee members (including the chairman) were supposed to be running a meeting for Part II students.

Nevertheless, we formed the view that nearly all the lecturing provided by the Faculty was either satisfactory or better — and in some cases excellent. The Chair of the Committee wrote to the two Heads of Department mentioning in total five courses which, in our opinion, had been either not well received or badly received specifically because lecturers' presentation.

In discussing these matters, the committee bore in mind such factors as whether the course is to be revised for next year and whether there is a different lecturer for the current year.

6. We also discussed various issues concerning individual courses (rather than their presentation). However, since we were discussing data from the previous year (and many of the courses were changed for this year or will be changed for next year) we have nothing to report.

7. In addition, the Teaching Committee was involved in various miscellaneous activities, including

Induction session for first year students

Examination session for Part IA students

Examination session for Part II students

Supervisor training sessions

STCS, September 27, 2006