

Annual Report of the Teaching Committee

May, 2005

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 A B Thompson (Junior Member, Churchill, Part IB)	
Vacancy (Junior Member)	

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 5 times in the 2004/05, four times in the Michaelmas term and once in the Lent 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 consider 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.
6. On the basis of all the available information, we found that nearly all the lecturing provided by the Faculty was either satisfactory or better — and in some cases excellent. 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.

At the instigation of the Committee, its chairman discussed the lecturing of four courses with the appropriate heads of department.
7. As requested by the Faculty Board, the committee e-mailed all Part II students at the division of the Michaelmas and Lent terms to ask specifically about the C-courses. In each term, disappointingly, one of the five courses received sustained criticism. For one

of these, Mathematical Biology, the schedule has been revised for next year. For the other, Geometry of Group Actions, it is hoped that discussions with the (new) lecturer will lead to an improvement.

8. In addition, the Teaching Committee was involved in various miscellaneous activities (for some of which the Board has received an independent report), including:

Induction session for first year students;

Examination briefing session for Part IA students;

E-mail to Part IA students explaining the rubric for the examination;

Redrafting the classification criteria that appear in the Schedules booklet;

Advising on the choice of lecturers;

Liaising with Ms Penny Longland on the timetable for lectures;

Supervisor training sessions.

STCS, September 27, 2006