

Annual Report of the Teaching Committee 2013–2014

1. The Teaching Committee is required by its terms of reference (FB 19th June 1998) to provide an annual report to the Faculty Board.
2. The members of the Teaching Committee are currently
Michael Dunn* Alex Chan* Vicky Neale Nathanaël Berestycki Imre Leader
Berry Groisman John Lister Colm Caulfield Tom Fisher Stephen Siklos†

The asterisk denotes student members, the dagger denotes the chair.

Student 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 Student 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 member and a Part II member (or possibly a Part III member and a Part IB or II member).

3. We met a total of 6 times in the academic year 2013/14, and dealt with some items by circulation. As usual, the major item on the agenda was a review of the undergraduate Tripos examinations but, as usual, there were other matters needing our attention this year.
4. We provided a detailed report on the undergraduate examinations to the Faculty Board, based on reports of the Examiners and the External Examiners, on examination data such as statistics and the actual questions, and on the information from the e-mail questionnaires. This report was considered by the Faculty Board at its November meeting, having previously been received by the meeting of Directors of Studies. It was then used as the basis of the Faculty Board's response to the Education Committee of the General Board.
5. We also produced reports on:
 - the timing (spacing, in fact) of the Tripos examinations;
 - the National Student Survey findings;
 - transferable skills;
 - improvements to the script read by examination invigilators;
 - course dependencies;
 - course competency standards;
 - the use of Moodle (reported orally to the Faculty Board).

6. We provided a report to Heads of Department, and to the Director of the Statslab, on the teaching of their departments, based on the paper and on-line questionnaires. In general, the feedback from students was very positive.

In this year's report we drew the attention of the Heads of Department to a total of 14 courses (out of 61): for 2 of these we recommended some action be taken by HoDs; for the other 12 courses the issues were either relatively minor or related to the schedule and/or the take-up or no longer relevant (for example, because of retirement).

We also drew attention to 14 courses for which the feedback was outstanding.

7. Members of the Teaching Committee were involved in various miscellaneous activities (for some of which the Faculty Board has received independent reports), including:
 - attending lectures of all new lecturers and some other lecturers, and discussing their lecturing;
 - arranging the induction session for first year (and other new) students;
 - arranging the examination briefing session for first year students;
 - advising heads of department on the choice of lecturers for next year's courses;
 - advising on the timetable for next year's lectures;
 - monitoring electronic student feedback (for example, via the Faculty Feedback line (née Hotline), and the second week questionnaires);
 - helping to run supervisor training sessions.

May 15, 2014