

Minutes

1pm to 2pm, Thursday 30 November 2023, Room 611

Committee members:

Staff	
Pier Luigi Dragotti	Director of Postgraduate Studies – PGR (Chair)
Lina Brazinskaite	Postgraduate Manager
Imad Jaimoukha	Postgraduate Tutor
Georgiou Pantelis	Previous Course Director (MSc Analogue and Digital Integrated Circuit Design)
Christos Papavassiliou	Course Director (MSc Analogue and Digital Integrated Circuit Design)
Krystian Mikolajczyk	Course Director (MSc Applied Machine Learning)
Tania Stathaki	Course Director (MSc Communications and Signal Processing)
David Angeli	Previous Course Director (MSc Control and Optimisation)
Giordano Scarciotti	Course Director (MSc Control and Optimisation)
Balarko Chaudhuri	Course Director (MSc Future Power Networks)
Hashi Chowdhury	Education Support Administrator (Committee Secretary)

Students	
Cédric Goubard	Department overall Postgraduate Rep (MSc + PhD)
Charmaine Liu	MSc Rep (Analogue and Digital Integrated Circuit Design)
Mauro Marino	MSc Rep (Applied Machine Learning)
Ben Townley	MSc Rep (Communications and Signal Processing)
Joanna Zhu	MSc Reps (Control and Optimisation)
Ignacio Serrano van der Shrafft	MSc Rep (Future Power Networks)
Jad Wehbeh	PhD Rep (Control and Power)
Berkay Özbek	PhD Rep (Circuits and Systems)
Sam Coward	PhD Rep (Circuits and Systems)
Pedro Gimenes	PhD Rep (Circuits and Systems)
Eric Zajler Grinstein	PhD Rep (Communications and Signal Processing)
Ciske Smit	PhD Rep (Intelligent Systems and Networks)
Yongqi Zhang	PhD Rep (Optical and Semiconductor Devices)

In attendance:

Christos-Savvas Bouganis	Director of Undergraduate Studies
Louise-Ann Hand	Liaison Librarian (Aeronautics, Earth Science & Engineering)
Javier Barria	MSc Reviewer 2 – Communications and Signal Processing

Agenda

1. *Welcome and introduction (PLD)*
2. *Feedback on the newly refurbished rooms 303 (MSc Reps) and 304 (MSc and PhD Reps)*
3. *EEE renovation plans (PLD/LB)*
4. *Updates on GTA rates (CB, PhD Reps)*
5. *Feedback from each MSc Rep (MSc Reps)*
6. *Any other business*

1. Welcome and introduction

Welcome and introduction.

All actions from the previous meeting have been completed.

Apologies/Absences:

Georgiou Pantelis	Previous Course Director (MSc Analogue and Digital Integrated Circuit Design)
Christos Papavassiliou	Course Director (MSc Analogue and Digital Integrated Circuit Design) – next year
David Angeli	Previous Course Director (MSc Control and Optimisation)
Balarko Chaudhuri	Course Director (MSc Future Power Networks)

2. Feedback on the newly refurbished rooms 303 and 304

PLD asked for feedback on rooms 303 and 304.

BT stated that a sign to keep the microwave clean should be put next to the microwave in Room 304. BT also mentioned that although the room gets busy during lunchtime, it does not become crowded and seats remain available.

JW reported that it is often difficult to find available seats in Room 304 to have lunch together as a group of 8-10 students as the tables become easily occupied, so they tend to have lunch at their office desks.

CS reported that some lecturers have desks in Room 303 and that it could be uncomfortable for these lecturers to work there while students are present.

PLD stated that they are probably IX academic staff who have their main office in a different building and that he will look into this.

SC stated that students on Level 9 have their own offices and do not need to use rooms 303 and 304.

MM reported that students complain that Room 304 is too cold. BT and JZ agreed.

CB explained that the air conditioning is controlled centrally and that the Department can only control some of the air conditioning panels and only temporarily. He suggested raising the concern to Zia Rahman or the SRGAs, as the settings could be wrong.

PLD asked if students use Room 303, which is a computer room, and if they like the setup of computer room and soft seating area next to each other. Students confirmed this is a suitable setup, and that by having a computer room students can often avoid bringing their laptops to university.

PLD suggested LB to send a reminder that there are computer spaces in Room 303.

JW asked if a water fountain could be installed in Room 304 and LB replied that this would not be possible.

3. EEE renovation plans

SC stated that renovation plans are affecting students on Level 9 the most. He expressed concerns that although updating the space is a great idea, none of the student representatives occupying the space are being involved in the discussion.

PLD explained that the message when discussions about the renovation were taking place, was that plans and decisions would be under review,

PLD further stated that this message was repeated at the townhall meeting in October 2023 where two options were discussed for when a new room will be created, most likely on Level 9: 1) the new room would be for PhD students and postdoc staff only and the old room for staff, 2) both rooms would be open to PhD students, postdocs and staff.

PLD explained that if staff and students are not willing to free up space for the new room, then the only PG common rooms would need to be room 304.

PG stated that although the reps understand the issue of space, the reduction of space and desks for students – which is something that impacts them – was not discussed with them and they were not given a clear timeline for the renovation.

PLD clarified that the Heads of Research Group were involved very early on and that they should then update their students. PLD mentioned that each floor should not belong exclusively to each group.

PLD stated that the room should be ready over the summer next year and that an update will be provided in January.

4. Updates on GTA rates

PLD stated that the College decided to carry out a full investigation on GTA rates, and that the plan for the current academic year is to continue what is already in place and that the new system will be implemented from September 2024.

CB o stated that GTA activities will be renumerated and that maximum prep time per activity will be discussed.

CB further stated that a step forward would be to open a discussion with GTAs and reps and ask what they consider an appropriate process for establishing prep time.

CB will check if GTAs/reps have received documents and updates from College.

CG asked if students could have their own process for selecting PhD reps.

CB mentioned that a survey will be carried out and LB suggested holding off from carrying out the survey for now as a larger-scale survey will need to be run later on.

CB suggested setting prep time per activity and set some expectations for prep time and that any deviation could be discussed with the relevant Module Leader.

PLD mentioned that the new rates are approximately aligned with what is currently in place.

5. Feedback from each MSc Rep

BT reported that for a particular coursework assignment, the only feedback students received was the final percentage and that more detailed feedback is needed. BT also reported that the relevant Module Leader stated that for more feedback students would need to open an investigation and that this could result in a lower grade.

TS said that this issue will be discussed with the Module Leader.

CB stated that the Department set clear expectations on feedback.

PLD stated that if a student wants their mark to be changed they would need to go through a formal appeal, however, the Module Leader should provide more detailed feedback than simply the final percentage.

ISvdS asked if students could get access to the project proposals earlier and expressed concern that there are many available projects but very few relate to FPN and suggested that projects are categorised by MSc. ISvdS also reported that some projects require elective modules and therefore students who did not take the required elective modules could not select those projects.

MM reported that a particular coursework assignment for an AML module is too time-consuming and that several students are complaining that they spend too much time on a coursework assignment that is not worth much. KM stated that this issue is already being discussed with the Module Leader and PLD stated that this will be looked into in the future to make sure that the workload is well matched with the weighting of the assignment. MM also stated that some students reported that the meeting to discuss their project proposals was rescheduled and some of these students have not received a rescheduled date yet. MM suggested that these meetings are scheduled well in advance so that students can know whether they can take a particular project or not in a timely manner. PLD will report the issue to Tom Clarke.

JZ said that she is happy with the course but reported that students are concerned about the module choice as they are mostly coursework-based so they are worried about the workload. PLD explained that deadlines are clearly set at the beginning of term to allow students to manage their time appropriately and asked GS to check if the deadlines were communicated to the students at the start of the term.

CL asked if a larger bin could be provided in Room 304 as it becomes full easily. CL also reported that there are clashes between core and elective modules. PLD explained that clashes are inevitable and if there is a specific clash experienced by many students, this should be reported. CL reported that ADIC students need access to the common room on Level 5 (Room 505) as they have lab sessions for a core module on Level 5 and mentioned that currently access is given by MEng students. LB will look into giving access to Room 505. CL reported that the workload for a particular module is too intense. PLD stated that this will be discussed with the Module Leader and the Course Director.

6. AOB

No AOB

Action tracker		
Action Items	Person responsible	Status
Check why lecturers are working in Room 303 sometimes.	PLD	
Send a reminder to students about the computer spaces in Room 303.	LB	
Provide an update on EEE renovation plans in January.	PLD	
Open a discussion with GTAs and reps on what they consider an appropriate process for establishing prep time.	PLD/CB	
Discuss with Module Leader issue with coursework feedback (module: Cryptography and Coding Theory).	TS	
Make MSc projects available earlier and look into categorising them by MSc course.	PLD	
Ensure taking specific elective modules is not a prerequisite for any MSc project.	PLD/BC	
Ensure that workload is well matched with assignment weighting (module: Machine Learning).	PLD/KM	
Discuss with Tom Clarke the issue regarding scheduling meetings for students to discuss MSc project proposals and look into scheduling these in advance.	PLD	
Check if assignment deadlines were clearly communicated to students at the start of term.	GS	
Look into giving ADIC students access to Room 505.	LB	
Issue with ADIC module - discuss module workload with the relevant Module Leader (module: Full-Custom Integrated Circuit Design).	PLD/CP	

