

**Minutes**

**1pm to 2pm, Thursday 6 June 2024, Room 611**

**Committee members:**

<b>Staff</b>	
Pier Luigi Dragotti	Director of Postgraduate Studies – PGR (Chair)
David Angeli	Director of Master Studies – PGT
Lina Brazinskaite	Education Office Manager
Imad Jaimoukha	Senior Tutor – PGR
Javier Barria	Senior Tutor – PGT
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)
Giordano Scarciozzi	Course Director (MSc Control and Optimisation)
Balarko Chaudhuri	Course Director (MSc Future Power Networks)
Annie Murphy	Postgraduate Research Officer
Jennifer Victor-Smith	Education Support Officer (PGT)
Hashi Chowdhury	Education Support Administrator (Committee Secretary)

<b>Students</b>	
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 Shraft	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)

**Optional:**

Christos-Savvas Bouganis	Director of Undergraduate Studies
Louise-Ann Hand	Liaison Librarian (Aeronautics, Earth Science & Engineering, EEE)

**In attendance:**

Mustapha El Chmouri	MSc Student (Control and Optimisation)
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## Agenda

1. *Welcome and introduction (PLD)*
2. *Action points from previous meeting*
3. *Updates on GTA rates (CB)*
4. *Resit policy for this year (DA)*
5. *Proposal for reducing paper waste in open book exams (ME)*
6. *Prayer space in the building (SC)*
7. *Feedback from each MSc Rep (MSc Reps)*
8. *Any other business*

### 1. Welcome and introduction

Welcome and introduction.

Apologies/Absences:

Giordano Scarciotti	Course Director (MSc Control and Optimisation)
Jad Wehbeh	PhD Rep (Control and Power)
Berkay Özbek	PhD Rep (Circuits and Systems)
Pedro Gimenes	PhD Rep (Circuits and Systems)
Eric Zajler Grinstein	PhD Rep (Communications and Signal Processing)
Yongqi Zhang	PhD Rep (Optical and Semiconductor Devices)

### 2. Action points from previous meeting

No comments on action points from the previous meeting.

### 3. Updates on GTA rates

LB confirmed that the document that was previously shared about GTA rates is finalised.

LB suggested that groups should be set up to discuss the work done by GTAs and what should be claimed.

CB stated that the Department needs to analyse how existing claim activities are mapped with the College rates, including how much time GTAs spend on these activities.

LB stated that new rates will be effective from October 2024.

CG asked if it is possible to have a detailed overview of the module activities over the summer and asked how much freedom will GTAs have to adjust the prep time.

LB agreed to carry out a first mapping of the current claim activities, extract pay rates per module and pass on the data to PhD reps so they can ask GTAs for feedback.

### 4. Resit policy for this year

DA went through the 'MSc August Resit Policy, Academic Year 23/24' PDF document, which was circulated to all MSc students after the SSC meeting:

*Students who have at most one failed subject which cannot be compensated and for which passing the August resit would possibly allow to complete the degree in time are allowed to resit in August with capped marks. This counts as an official resit. A student is allowed to defer this to the next available opportunity, (typically Summer term of 24/25 or December depending on the module) if they feel they need more time to improve on the failed subject.*

*In summary:*

- *A resit is allowed if a student has at most 2 failures with marks in the 40%-50% range and one additional failure with marks <40%.*
- *A resit is allowed if a student has 3 failures with marks in the 40%-50% range.*
- *Students that need more than 1 resit are not allowed to resit in August.*
- *This does not apply to students with Mitigating Circumstances.*

PLD mentioned students will be communicated the outcome of their exams after the Board of Examiners meeting in July.

IJ reminded students that only a lettered grade will be given in July, with no exact marks, and they will be told if they failed any modules.

## **5. Proposal for reducing paper waste in open book exams**

ME presented his proposal to the Committee:

Each year, students in open book exams print substantial amounts of course slides and lecture notes, which are thrown away after the exams. ME suggested implementing a system where students can opt to hand in their printed materials after their exams. These materials can then be organised and offered to students the following year, thereby significantly reducing the need for new prints. ME explained that his initiative could serve as both a sustainability project and a resource-saving strategy, directly supporting the College's commitment to environmental responsibility.

PLD was concerned about course curriculum/material changing every year, making the notes potentially inaccurate for future students.

CB mentioned that this initiative would involve going through piles of notes to check that the content is accurate/adequate for other students to use.

CB also stated that the Department would like to move away from asking students to print out notes and instead implement a 'bring your device system' for open book exams. CB explained that the idea is that a software would need to be installed on the students' devices to ensure that no other information is accessed on the device during the exams other than the allowable material.

PLD suggested purchasing cheap tablets instead of asking students to bring their own devices but concerns about the life span of these devices were raised.

One MSc rep asked CB why open exams are necessary. CB explained that it is not always sufficient to assess master's level modules with closed-book exams and that open book exams allow Module Leaders to assess students from a different angle.

One PhD rep suggested giving students the option to either bring printed notes or their own device with the software installed.

PLD suggested to discuss this matter in the next academic year.

## **6. Prayer space in the building**

SC raised a request on behalf of a student about the provision of a multi-faith prayer space while the original space in Level 9 is unavailable due to ongoing electrical works due to the renovation. SC mentioned that Zia Rahman suggested the student who raised the issue to speak with AM who can then request the Facilities Team to add this to the list of works.

PLD asked if this is the first time that the issue is raised.

SC replied that this was formally raised to AM.

AM confirmed that the Department Operations Manager is aware of this request.

PLD agreed to discuss with The Department Operations Manager to see whether an alternative prayer space in the building for students and staff can be found. However, it is worth remembering that these are available on campus.

## **7. Feedback from each MSc Rep**

JZ stated that the compulsory Signal Processing module is only assessed through exam and that the cohort would like the ADIC course to be more practical with more lab sessions as they currently only have four. CP explained that this academic year there is less practical exposure for this course due to lack of academic staff. CB explained that a mutual expectations document for coursework feedback is being prepared by the Department Teaching Committee and that will soon be available to students. JZ suggested organising group sessions led by students to discuss coursework feedback. JZ also asked if coursework deadlines and what should be done for the project could be made clearer. PLD pointed out that this information is already available on the College website and students should be able to find it.

MM asked when precise exam marks will become available.

CB replied that they will be available in July but will not be released directly to the students until much later.

CB explained that if a student has applied for PhD and marks are required as part of the application process, the Department will pass on the marks directly to the university that the student has applied to.

MM reported that the cohort has not received the marks for the Adaptive Signal Processing and Machine Intelligence coursework, and it has been approximately two months.

KM agreed to look into this.

MM expressed concerns from the cohort regarding the coursework for Advanced Deep Learning Systems, where some students complained about low marks, especially for the midterm assignment coursework, especially considering the issues students faced with the employed platform.

PLD clarified that this is the first year that this module is run and that the Course Director is aware of this issue.

CB reassured MM that the Department has processes in place to ensure that every module is moderated according to the expected performance.

ISvdS mentioned that having many exams in three weeks in Spring is exhausting for students, due to the amount of content they have to remember, and suggested introducing exams in December.

ISvdS also mentioned the cohort was expecting more lab sessions based on hands-on experience as part of their course instead of being coursework-based.

BC understood the concern raised by the student and explained that the backup plan of having fewer lab sessions had to be implemented due to lack of staff, and offered to provide students with virtual lab demonstrations.

PLD mentioned about considering having fewer exams in the future.

BC mentioned that one of the core modules is coursework only.

JZ mentioned issues regarding lab accessibility, including the availability of workstations during coursework deadlines, so she suggested introducing a booking system for lab workstations. She also mentioned that the exam period is too intense.

BT reiterated the importance of setting exams for December.

CB explained that exams cannot take place in December because there is not enough teaching time before December to be able to deliver enough lectures to give the content to the students. He explained that exams cannot take place in January – which is at the start of the Spring term – as students would have to prepare over the Christmas break, which is much shorter than the Easter break. He also explained that setting exams in January could also eat up on their project.

BC mentioned that students may say that other universities are able to set exams in January.

PLD suggested to discuss this offline due to time constraints.

A discussion was made with BT and TS about correlating exams with lab sessions. TS agreed to check workloads in order to spread out lab sessions throughout the year.

## **8. Any other business**

No other business.

<b>Action tracker</b>		
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Status</b>
Set up a group to discuss the work done by GTAs and the associated prep time that should be claimed.	LB/CB & PhD reps	
Mapping of existing rates to the new ones.	CB, LB	
After the mapping, organise a session with GTAs to discuss prep time.	PhD reps	
Share number of hours per module split by different rates with PhD reps	LB	Done
Circulate the 'MSc August Resit Policy, Academic Year 23/24' PDF document.	DA	Done
Discuss the provision of an alternative prayer space for staff and students with the Department Operations Manager.	PLD	
Circulate the mutual expectations document for coursework feedback.	DA	
Organise group sessions led by students to discuss coursework feedback.	JV	
Ensure that marks are released for the Adaptive Signal Processing and Machine Intelligence coursework.	KM	
Provide students with virtual lab demonstrations.	BC	
Look into introducing a booking system for lab workstations.	PLD	
Check workloads and look into spreading out lab sessions throughout the year.	TS	