

**Minutes**

**1pm to 2pm, Wednesday 31 May 2023, Room 611**

**Committee members:**

<b>Staff</b>	
Pier Luigi Dragotti	Director of Postgraduate Studies (Chair)
Lina Brazinskaite	Postgraduate Manager
Imad Jaimoukha	Postgraduate Tutor
Pantelis Georgiou	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	Course Director (MSc Control Systems)
Balarko Chaudhuri	Course Director (MSc Future Power Networks)
Hashi Chowdhury	Education Support Administrator (Committee Secretary)

<b>Students</b>	
Cédric Goubard	Department overall Postgraduate Rep (MSc + PhD)
Nicholas Sanchez Flores	MSc Rep (Analogue and Digital Integrated Circuit Design)
Vinayak Unnithan	MSc Rep (Applied Machine Learning)
Kate Zhao	MSc Rep (Communications and Signal Processing)
Naveen Antony Ananth	MSc Reps (Control and Optimisation)
Tasya Christnantasari	MSc Reps (Control and Optimisation)
Eva Sanchez Montiel	MSc Rep (Future Power Networks)
Eduardo Vila	PhD Rep (Control and Power)
Jemima Graham	PhD Rep (Control and Power)
Costanza Gulli	PhD Rep (Circuits and Systems Research Group)
Emilie D'Olné	PhD Rep (Communications and Signal Processing)
Dimitra Tsakona	PhD Rep (Intelligent Systems and Networks)
Yongqi Zhang	PhD Rep (Optical and Semiconductor Devices)

**In attendance:**

Louise-Ann Hand	Liaison Librarian (Aeronautics, Earth Science & Engineering)
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**Agenda**

1. *Welcome (PLD)*
2. *Action points from previous meeting (PLD)*
3. *Results of the survey on PhD supervision of master's project (ED'O)*
4. *MSc opportunity for re-assessment (PLD/IJ)*
5. *MSc seminar series and projects with industry (PLD)*
6. *Microwave in the MSc Common Room (LB)*
7. *Feedback from the reps*
8. *AOB*

## 1. Welcome

Welcome and introduction.

Apologies/Absences:

Cédric Goubard	Department overall Postgraduate Rep (MSc + PhD)
Jemima Graham	PhD Rep (Control and Power)
Costanza Gulli	PhD Rep (Circuits and Systems Research Group)
Dimitra Tsakona	PhD Rep (Intelligent Systems and Networks)
Yongqi Zhang	PhD Rep (Optical and Semiconductor Devices)

## 2. Action points from previous meeting

The following updates were provided by the Committee.

Action Items from previous meeting	Person responsible	Status
Add a paragraph on the automatic reminders explaining the significance of recording attendance and the impact on visa.	LB	Done
Send out an email to all MSc and PhD students with a link to access the app.	LB	Done
Send list of rooms associated with unclear/unavailable recordings to LB so that she can feedback to ICT.	LB	LB has not receive this information yet
Ensure that teaching material is provided to students ahead of the lectures.	PLD	In progress
Check and ensure that the module catalogues are aligned with the module specifications.	PLD/MSc Course Administrators	In progress
Follow up with Zia Rahman to see if a small meeting room could be made available to CAP students (LB), DA to raise the issue with HoG in Control.	LB, DA	LB has passed on student concerns to CAP HoG as space is managed by each research group separately. HoG is aware of this issue. Facilities manager is looking into areas next to the staircases to put pods/telephone booths. This will need to have fire safety approval first.

## 3. Results of the survey on PhD supervision of master's project

ED'O shared the results of the survey on PhD supervision of master's projects with the Committee.

PLD thanked ED'O for conducting the survey and sharing the slides.

ED'O thanked PLD for the support received in conducting the survey.

ED'O reported that 35 responses were collected. As part of the survey, the students were asked if the masters project they are assigned to are related to their research area. 10 students responded that it is somewhat related, 8 responded that they are related, 2 responded that they are not related.

ED'O stated that the results were not as negative as they thought but she also highlighted that there are extreme cases of project supervision that need to be addressed, and that more structure is required around PhD supervision and that sometimes students feel lost.

PLD said that according to the survey results nearly 50% supervise a project that is within their research interest and 50% responded that the project they supervise is somewhat related to their research area. PLD stated that results are not as alarming as expected although there is indeed variability in responses as a result of variability in the supervision experience.

PLD agreed to prepare a document to set the right expectations with supervisors regarding what can be expected PhD students to do to help supervision of master's projects.

**ACTION:** set expectations with supervisors over the summer clarifying what they can and cannot expect from their PhD students regarding help with supervision of master's projects. Clarify with supervisors that PhD students can help with supervision but cannot undertake most of the supervision work for them (PLD/DoUG studies).

ED'O suggested to set clear role/structure of responsibilities with more transparency.

EV asked PLD if a guideline will be created so that master's students, PhD students and supervisors can refer to the same document.

PLD stated that the Department will work on creating the guideline this summer. PLD explained that the document, however, will probably not be made too formal and public for the next academic year and the more formal the document, the more time is required to implement it.

ED'O asked PLD if PhD reps could be kept in the loop so that they are aware of any progress that is being made in creating and implementing the guideline and PLD agreed to keep them in the loop.

**ACTION:** Keep PhD reps updated on the progress that is being made in implementing the mutual expectations guideline for the PhD supervision of master's projects (PLD).

ED'O asked PLD if current PhD students involved in supervision can get paid for their work if the same survey is conducted in two years' time and the results have not changed.

PLD explained that he doesn't agree with the principle of treating help with supervision as GTA work. Moreover, there is no sufficient funding for this, and that the Department would like to solve the problem by keeping the reps in the loop.

PLD recognised the issue with the cost-of-living crisis and inflation and stated that the Department will look into whether it is possible to mitigate the impact on students.

TS stated that if PhD students are asked to help supervise a project, there must be something beneficial they gain from this experience, and that a number of students like being involved in the supervision process.

PLD also agreed that he has PhD students who want to supervise, and that supervision, which involves dealing with a challenge that is open-ended, should be part of the PhD process, although cases of exploitation must be avoided.

LB reminded PhD reps that Graduate School has a course for PhD students on how to supervise a project, and that this can be taken as part of the four credit courses required to meet the LSR requirements.

**ACTION:** Advertise the Graduate School course on project supervision to PhD students (LB).

#### **4. MSc opportunity for re-assessment**

PLD stated that in the past, because of covid, there was opportunity for in-year assessment and that these were exceptional and unusual.

PLD also stated that students can be re-assessment in August if they have failed one module that cannot be compensated – he explained this in detail.

PLD explained that the formal re-assessment format is decided later once the number of students that need to retake the module has been determined.

PLD also explained that due to a new curriculum being followed for both UG and MSc students and due to new rules and regulations, the number of students failing cannot be predicted.

PLD also reminded students that if they fail more than 3 modules, these cannot be compensated.

IJ said that he emailed all students who have failed (below 40%) or achieved compensated pass (40-50%) and that those who have not received the email should assume they have passed.

#### **5. MSc seminar series and projects with industry**

The Department is trying to improve connection with industry for MSc students. PLD stated that a survey was conducted, and that the outcome was positive and five new projects with industry have been added to the list of MSc projects. This is mostly due to the fact that a seminar series with industry was organized this year for the first time.

#### **6. Microwave in the MSc Common Room**

The MSc common room now has a microwave. It will stay there if the students keep it clean. Wipes have been provided to clean any spillages.

#### **7. Feedback from the reps**

TC asked if MSc student reps can be given access to the relevant distribution lists so they can send emails to their MSc cohorts.

ACTION: Grant MSc reps access to the relevant distribution lists so they can send email to their MSc cohorts (LB).

One MSc rep reported that some lecturers were not helpful when asked reasonable questions from students in preparation for the exams.

PLD advised students that they can indicate such issues on the module feedback forms.

TS and LB mentioned that these episodes occurred close to the exam period after the MEC survey was conducted and that therefore they could have not been captured in the survey.

The MSc rep was advised to discuss this issue offline with PLD.

The MSc rep mentioned that students also experienced issues with these modules throughout the year.

PLD reminded the reps again that the best way of capturing these issues is through the MEC survey.

BC stated that MEC would not help students of the current year's cohorts and that students should be able to complain to PLD or to the relevant Course Director.

NAA mentioned that issues that he raised at the last SSC meeting were resolved in a timely manner. He reported that Control and Optimisation students are suggesting that modules with more practical applications are added to the course. He also mentioned that students start the course with varying degree of programming skills and suggested that a programming/coding course is provided prior to the start of the course.

ED'O asked if a reminder email could be sent to the new PhD students reminding them that GTA prep time can be claimed.

LB said that the College is working on creating a guidance document for GTA work and when this is published, the Department will work with PhD reps to prepare a detailed policy.

EV reminded the Committee about the issue with meeting space/space to eat for CAP students on Level 11. PLD mentioned that a meeting will take place with the Head of Groups to discuss the issue with meeting spaces for PhD students as currently there is no meeting space on Level 7 and there is only a small tea point on Level 11.

## **8. AOB**

LB said that the College is taking 360 images of some of the spaces in the Department on 13 June and encouraged students to be in common areas and Level 5 lab for the photos.

**ACTION:** Inform students what time the marketing team will be taking the photos on 13 June (LB).

LB reminded MSc reps that if they are asked by their classmates when the course will end, they should inform them that it will end in September and that the period after the exams is not holiday time and it should be used to work on masters projects. Students cannot leave the country for a long period when working on the project and that this is especially important for students with a visa.

LB said that MSc students will be asked to complete a feedback form for the MSc careers workshop that was held on 25 May.

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**Action tracker**

<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Status</b>
ACTION: set expectations with supervisors over the summer clarifying what they can and cannot expect from their PhD students regarding supervision of master's projects. Clarify with supervisors that PhD students can help with supervision but cannot undertake most of the supervision work for them.	PLD, Christos Bouganis	
Keep PhD reps updated on the progress that is being made in implementing the mutual expectations guideline for the PhD supervision of master's projects.	PLD	
Advertise the Graduate School course on project supervision to PhD students.	LB	LB sent an email asking PhD reps to share information about the training course with students in their research teams and asked for suggestions on how to best advertise the course to PhD students.
Grant MSc reps access to the relevant distribution lists so they can send email to their MSc cohorts.	LB	Done
Inform students what time the marketing team will be taking the photos on 13 June.	LB	