

HoDoMS

HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS OF MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES IN THE UK

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 1.30pm

on Friday 5 April 2013 at University of Birmingham Conference Centre.

Present:

David Arrowsmith	<i>Chair</i>
Toby O'Neil	<i>Secretary</i>
Dugald Duncan	<i>Treasurer</i>
Peter Clarkson	
Mary McAlinden	
Jeremy Levesley	
Kevin Parrott	

In attendance:

David Youdan (for Nigel Steele)	IMA
Lesley Walsh	LMS
Fiona Nixon (for Stephen Huggett)	LMS

Chair

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1.	Apologies	
	Pargat Calay, Cathy Hobbs, Jeff Griffiths, Charles Taylor.	
2.	Approval of minutes of January 2013 meeting	
	Minutes approved with no significant corrections.	
3.	Matters arising from previous minutes	
	<p><i>Website update</i></p> <p>DA has set up a (free) dropbox account in the name of HoDoMS ORG and is proceeding to populate it with files for sharing. A link can be supplied to committee members on request.</p>	DA
	<p><i>Finances</i></p> <p>DD will investigate whether it is simpler to set up a new bank account rather than change the names of the signatories. Two signatories (DA and DD?) to be set up.</p>	DD
	<p><i>Conference</i></p> <p>Conference attendance was slightly up on previous years but better may still be possible</p>	
4.	Correspondence / Chair's communications	
	No correspondence to report.	
	<p>Chair's Report</p> <p><i>MATHEMATICS INTERFACE WITH THE DfE and GOVERNMENT</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The interface between Government and the mathematics community still looks to be random and fast moving. The Government are producing fast policies and would like fast solutions. Perhaps it is good that sometimes we as a community are in no position to deliver them! <p>I am increasingly pleased with the role ACME plays in their interaction with the DfE. They are well placed between the school/college communities and University. They listen to interested parties and take up moderate positions. I think that we should support ACME in their programme of liaison with DfE.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> JMC looks entrapped by bureaucracy and in my view is an unwieldy structure for making decisive strategies. It does have the advantage of having most interested parties as members, and so could continue to be extremely useful in an advisory role. <p>JL: A diagram of all these groups and their relationships to each other may be helpful.</p> <p>MH: If JMC was just for networking, then it wouldn't need an executive but historically was more than this. It is not clear that it should still be developing policy but hard to see a way forward. The membership is now very wide, making it difficult to develop effective policy - but the executive wants to.</p> <p>MM: The link between HE and JMC seems very minimal.</p>	DA to do

	<p>MH: May be worth talking to the Chair of the JMC (Tim Rowland) and sound them out about this.</p> <p><i>Computer Aided Assessment in Mathematics (appendix 1)</i> (A version of) this project is being progressed through the auspices of the HEA.</p> <p><i>DTG Allocation.</i> The allocation has been announced and seems to be in line with expectations. Methodology was rather opaque and process for challenge/clarification unclear. However nothing to be gained by comment/challenge at the moment. FN stated that she would like to know how the allocation plays out in reality. (Eg, will departments receive, from their University, the monies notionally allocated to them.) The CMS is interested in this and is likely to follow up.</p> <p><i>HoDoMS Website</i> DA reported that he was hopeful that this was back on track.</p> <p><i>Co-option.</i> DA asked the committee to agree to the co-option of Jan van den Heuvel to the committee: this was agreed.</p>																			
5.	Review of conference and initial planning for 2014																			
	<p>Generally agreed that the 2013 conference had a good choice of topics and speakers, with particular praise for the after dinner speaker and the presentations concerning external views of the discipline. The panel discussion worked well.</p> <p>Still more to do to increase attendance.</p> <p><i>Initial ideas for speakers/topics in 2014.</i> Sir Adrian Smith Liz Truss David Sweeney (HEFCE) Masters teaching.</p>																			
6.	Succession Planning																			
	Agreed to make this a standing item.	TO																		
7.	Watching briefs/external organisation representation																			
	<p>Current Brief distribution:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="268 1655 1227 2033"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="268 1655 900 1693">Agency</th> <th data-bbox="900 1655 1227 1693"></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1693 900 1731">JMC</td> <td data-bbox="900 1693 1227 1731">David Arrowsmith</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1731 900 1769">ACME</td> <td data-bbox="900 1731 1227 1769">Kevin Parrott</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1769 900 1807">CMS</td> <td data-bbox="900 1769 1227 1807">David Arrowsmith</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1807 900 1845">NCETM HE</td> <td data-bbox="900 1807 1227 1845">Pargat Calay</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1845 900 1883">HEA MSOR</td> <td data-bbox="900 1845 1227 1883">Mary McAlinden</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1883 900 1921">STEM (incl WP)</td> <td data-bbox="900 1883 1227 1921">vacant</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1921 900 1960">EPSRC</td> <td data-bbox="900 1921 1227 1960">Dugald Duncan</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="268 1960 900 1998">IMA</td> <td data-bbox="900 1960 1227 1998">Nigel Steele</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Agency		JMC	David Arrowsmith	ACME	Kevin Parrott	CMS	David Arrowsmith	NCETM HE	Pargat Calay	HEA MSOR	Mary McAlinden	STEM (incl WP)	vacant	EPSRC	Dugald Duncan	IMA	Nigel Steele	
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	RSS	Charles Taylor	
	ORSOC	vacant	
	TDA	Jeremy Levesley	
	UUK	Toby O'Neil	
	Bologna International Affairs	Charles Taylor	
	Engineering Professors Council maths working group	Cathy Hobbs	
	<p>ACME Was the subject of a conference talk: nothing to add.</p> <p>LMS (FN/LW) Has a new website. Very successful launch of the Good Practice Report at the House of Commons. There will be a Women in Mathematics Day from 18-19 April at the Newton Institute in Cambridge – all welcome. The Research Policy Committee is looking for evidence (to pass onto CMS) concerning issues related to funding of mathematical sciences.</p> <p>IMA (DY) Runs two employer forums.</p>		
9	Any other business		
	Provisionally agreed that Conference 2014 will be on 24/25 April 2014.		
10	Date of next meeting		
	11.30am Friday 13 th September, De Morgan House, London.		TCON

Minutes approved:

TC O'Neil – Hon Sec.

DK Arrowsmith – Chair

Appendix 1: Computer Assisted Assessment in Mathematics

Rationale

Many mathematical sciences departments are now utilising computer assisted assessment (CAA) as a means of effectively assessing and provided feedback to large numbers of undergraduate students, particularly those in Years 1 and 2.

While usage of CAA is increasing, many different systems are currently in use across the higher education sector. For those seeking to implement CAA within their departments, it can be a difficult and confusing choice as to which system will most effectively and efficiently meet their needs. Additionally, for those already utilising CAA, it is unclear of the level of compatibility that exists between the various systems, particularly when it comes to transferring questions and question types.

Overview of the Project

Following on from a series of projects established through the National HE STEM Programme, we feel there is a need for a further study to develop a 'position document' for the mathematics community that will enable the sector-wide approach to the implementation and use of CAA to be adopted and for effective practices and materials to be shared. This position document would:

1. Review the current use of CAA within the mathematical sciences community, and in doing so identify:
 - a. Which systems are being utilised;
 - b. How these systems are being utilised. In particular with which mathematical topics are the being used, for what size cohorts, and at what level of study?

- c. The range of existing materials and questions (topics) that are available and which could be (freely) shared between departments.
2. Identify departments wishing to implement CAA in the near future. This might then allow a community-wide proposal for funding to subsequently be submitted to an appropriate funding body.
3. Contain case studies of the systems currently in use with a view to enabling those departments wishing to embed CAA in the future to make a selection that is appropriate for them in an evidence informed manner.

Costings

To be added.

Bill Foster (Newcastle University)

Michael Grove (University of Birmingham)

Jeremy Levesley (University of Leicester)