

HoDoMS AGM 2014 – Chair’s Report

A. Input to Government and other Professional Bodies

During my time as chair I have been a member of the

- a. EPSRC SAT- Subject Advisory Team (2010-2014) ,
- b. HEdSA(IMA), (2011-2014)
- c. LMS Research Committee (co-opted member, 2011-2014)
- d. a member of the Executive Committee of the Joint Mathematical Council (2014-2015)
- e. Subject Benchmark Committee for Mathematical Sciences (2014)

Undergraduates

It is through some of these channels that I have shown a direct interest in the teaching of pre-HE mathematics. I have tried to put over salient points which have arisen from discussions in the HoDoMS annual conference.

The Government has continued a frenzied approach to change in the A-level curriculum of Mathematics and many other subjects. Initially, there was even a dislocation of examination revision from syllabus revision, which was incomprehensible.

Given the breadth and sheer number of organizations supporting mathematics teaching and support in the UK, it is not surprising that messages going to the DfE are not always synchronized or weighted in terms of importance.

I have, on behalf of HoDoMS, tried to keep the message as simple as possible and tried to put it through the most effective channel.

In my view, that has been to liaise with other interested parties, e.g. LMS, IMA and RSS, and channel integrated ideas through ACME, the Royal Society based “Advisory Council for Mathematics Education” with whom we keep in close contact.

ACME is sensitive to the need to give clear and simple messages to the DfE and they have an ongoing dialogue. Our main concern from recent conferences is that, while we were in sympathy with the raising of academic standards, this had to be carried out with some care and preferably incrementally through examinations. We reminded the DfE of the Curriculum 2000 debacle! More precisely, we argued that syllabuses should not be changed for changes sake, and an improvement in standards could be led by changes in examination style with no change in syllabus.

It is good to see that there is now some link between syllabus and examination in the DfE’s thinking, and that there is a delay of one year in Mathematics before curriculum changes will be introduced.

Research and Postgraduates

As an EPSRC SAT member and a chair and member of several prioritization panels, I have seen that quality of the applicant and their project have remained a strict priority, with National Importance and Strategic fit secondary.

Nevertheless, the mission of the EPSRC to develop world class research environments - while, of course, wholly worthy - has resulted in an increased focus of research funding particularly with PG studentships in Doctoral Training Centres. This inevitably means with CDTs being the key focus for PG training that the wider funding of DTAs will be less significant in the years to come.

B. HoDoMS Administration

Website

We have changed the web-site from being hosted by the LMS. We were having difficulty with getting the site updated, as we were once removed from the editing. We hope that the new set-up will give us better and speedier access to updating. The new web-site also now includes archive material for HoDoMS. We do wish to thank the LMS for redesigning our website while we were hosted by their server. But there is still work to be done.

Finally, I would like to record my thanks for all those who have supported me as Chair over the last 3 years.

**David Arrowsmith,
Chair, HoDoMS.
24th April 2014.**