

HoDoMS

HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS OF MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES IN THE UK

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 11.30am on Friday 17 January 2014 at De Morgan House, Russell Square,
London

Present:

David Arrowsmith	<i>Chair</i>
Toby O'Neil	<i>Secretary</i>
Kevin Parrott	
Mary McAlinden	
Charles Taylor	

In attendance:

Nigel Steele	IMA
Lindsay Walsh	LMS/CMS
Stephen Huggett	LMS

<i>Chair</i>	<i>Vice-Chair</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
Prof. David K. Arrowsmith School of Mathematical Sciences Queen Mary, University of London	Prof. Charles C Taylor Department of Statistics University of Leeds Leeds	Dr Toby O'Neil Department of Mathematics and Statistics The Open University Walton Hall	Prof. Dugald Duncan Duncan School of Mathematical & Computer Sciences Heriot-Watt University Edinburgh
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1.	Apologies	
	Peter Clarkson, Dugald Duncan, Jan van den Heuvel, Cathy Hobbs, Pargat Calay, Jeremy Levesley. Thanks recorded to the LMS for hosting the meeting.	
2.	Approval of minutes of September 2013 meeting	
	Minutes approved subject to some minor amendments.	
3.	Matters not otherwise on the agenda	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of maths as SIV: may be losing this status due to increase in number of students studying. Not clear that there is any extra lobbying that can usefully be done. • Status of NSS league tables needs clarifying. Possible topic for discussion at conference - discipline performance is lower than others. Tony Mann (Greenwich) has some interest in this topic. Sarah Howells (head of student opportunity at HEFCE) • MMcA: The HEA is supporting an e-assessment group. Bill Foster (Newcastle) coordinating and setting up a website with useful e-assessment information. May be premature to invite them to speak at HoDoMS now - next year may be better. • SH: Need to provide two people to LMS committees - one for education and one for general committee. Jeremy Levesley willing to do education. 	
4.	Correspondence / Chair's communications	
	No correspondence to report.	
	Chair's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main concern: government initiatives on curriculum (mostly related to schools but some directly affect HE). Particular concerns with the 16-18 curriculum revision and on the rushed GCSE changes. Our links with ACME are useful and have resulted in sharing of information about A level changes. Key point they (and we) endeavoured to make was that too much, too fast is dangerous. The mathematical community is arguing that exams/assessment are where efforts should be focused but government seems to be focusing on curriculum. DA thinks ACME is the group closest to government and is the natural route to reach government. • NS: Peter Giblin discovered that QAA is arranging for the mathematics benchmark statement to be reviewed/revise. The timescale is not known and unclear how the tension between keeping flexibility and specificity will be managed. Those present agreed that the ideal outcome would be that the revision would still be useful to departments when making cases within their own university. May need to include something more specific to do with 	

	<p>employability? KP raised concern about whether mathematics graduates are in general well enough prepared to go on to study mathematics MScs or whether there is often a mismatch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing else to report. 	
5.	Financial Arrangements	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DD: (Report tabled) Still making slow progress in sorting out bank account. Next transition should be more straightforward since there will be more signatories on the account. • MM: can we not have automatic conference registration - eventbrite does it. 	
6.	HoDoMS website	
	<p>Mock-up at http://kineticmaths.com/Hodoms/Home.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a copy of current site which we have full control over. • Propose that we move to this. No dissent from those present. • Cost so far has been £500. • Need to identify people (through next meeting) to take responsibility for it: • Need to switch where hodoms.org points to when we are ready. • Need to find out how to edit/maintain new site. • Possible Additions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Conference needs to be more visible 2 List of departments in the UK 3 Committee contacts 4 Diagram of committee relationships <p>Short email to mailing list asking for suggestions (now!)</p>	TO/DA
7.	Planning for Conference 24/25 April 2014	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The after dinner speech is on the mathematics of juggling - may need to think about how this will be organised. What does the speaker require? Will need screen and projector. • There was some discussion of the proposed speakers for the conference and suggestions were made as to possible alternatives should our first choices be unavailable. Possible themes/topics could be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A e-assessment or use of technology, B working with students in partnership, 	

	<p>C EPSRC,</p> <p>D meaning of impact in general sense – for example impact on students,</p> <p>E discussion of how REF went and impact on departments/staff. [Would need Chatham House rules.] ,</p> <p>F is maths still a SIV,</p> <p>G something on big data,</p> <p>H employability,</p> <p>I NSS data and student experience,</p> <p>J the economic impact of mathematics.</p> <p>Send round a reminder of dates for 2014 around HoDoMS list..</p>																																	
8.	Government Curriculum Initiatives																																	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeremy is likely to be our nominee on the LMS Education Committee. Will the body revising benchmark be looking for representation from us? 																																	
9.	Succession Planning																																	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will need a new chair and vice chair and one (or two) elected committee members. Use previous year's list to determine electorate if required. Need to email HoDoMS list inviting nominations to committee. 	TO																																
10.	Watching briefs/external organisation representation																																	
	<p>Current Brief distribution:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Agency</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>JMC</td> <td>David Arrowsmith</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ACME</td> <td>Kevin Parrott</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CMS</td> <td>David Arrowsmith</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NCETM HE</td> <td>Pargat Calay</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HEA MSOR</td> <td>Mary McAlinden</td> </tr> <tr> <td>STEM (incl WP)</td> <td>vacant</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EPSRC</td> <td>Dugald Duncan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IMA</td> <td>Nigel Steele</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LMS</td> <td>Stephen Huggett</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RSS</td> <td>Charles Taylor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ORSOC</td> <td>vacant</td> </tr> <tr> <td>College of School Scholarship</td> <td>Jeremy Levesley</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UUK</td> <td>Toby O'Neil</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bologna International Affairs</td> <td>Charles Taylor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Engineering Professors Council (on engineering</td> <td>Cathy Hobbs</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	LMS	Stephen Huggett	RSS	Charles Taylor	ORSOC	vacant	College of School Scholarship	Jeremy Levesley	UUK	Toby O'Neil	Bologna International Affairs	Charles Taylor	Engineering Professors Council (on engineering	Cathy Hobbs	
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education, employment and skills)

CMS (LW) First meeting of CMS with the new chair (Adrian Smith). He listened to members as to priorities/where focus should be. Still early days but things are happening.

JMC: Just celebrated its 50th anniversary.

EPSRC: (DD)

- **Centres for Doctoral Training**

Just under 180 outline bids were shortlisted, and interviews (spread over 16 panels) were held on October 23-24 2013, with an overall panel meeting on October 25. EPSRC announced 72 successful proposals on November 22. They also announced on January 9th 2014 that a further 19 CDTs will be funded, bringing the total to 91. Apparently they told panellists that they are also intending to put forward a package of further centres to be considered in the March budget. The EPSRC Mathematical Sciences autumn newsletter identified 8 successful mathematical sciences proposals: 3.5 to Oxford, 1.5 to Warwick, 1 to Lancaster, 1 to UCL, and 0.5 each to Imperial and Reading. EPSRC information sent to applicants said that 80% of the proposals were identified as fundable (presumably this corresponds to a panel ranking of 1-4, see below). EPSRC panel information is published on their "Grants on the Web" pages, and a summary is tabulated below. Some key points (before the announcement of the 19 new centres on January 9th 2014):

- 90 of the proposals are listed as "decision awaited" - presumably this is the announced 72 plus the ones to be announced in January (but note that the total is 90 and not 91);
- the "decision awaited" proposals are not ranked, but all the others are ranked 3, 4, or 5 - so presumably "decision awaited" corresponds to a ranking of 1 or 2;
- 21% of the proposals are ranked 5, and presumably these were regarded as unfundable;
- the mathematical sciences panels appear to be D and E;
- 51% of proposals overall are in the "decision awaited" category (the corresponding figure for panel D is 40% and for E is 36%);
- 65% of those proposals regarded as fundable are in the "decision awaited" category (the corresponding figure for both panels D & E is 40%).

- **Taught Course Centres (TCCs)** The TCCs Directors met recently and agreed to ask EPSRC if they would consider continuing funding the centres after the grants run out in 2016. The arguments in favour are that they do an excellent job, cover much of the country, and offer exceptional value for money. The TCCs were established to improve the competitiveness of UK PhD training in the mathematical sciences, but are run on shoestring budgets – each whole TCC costs EPSRC roughly the same as one and a bit CDT students.

The EPSRC People Pipeline project is gathering data on UK PhD training in the mathematical sciences, and the TCC Directors hope that it acknowledges the role of the TCCs and the overwhelmingly positive feedback they receive in reviews and questionnaires.

	<p>HEA: (MMcA): major initiative on transition into HE in the mathematical sciences. Already mentioned eassessment. Usual run of PG workshops (had about 250 attendees so far). There has been a challenge in finding venues for the new lecturer induction courses due to needing to run software at the locations chosen.</p> <p>IMA: Nigel Steele finishes his term at the end of the year and David Arrowsmith is taking over. Sent letters regarding to ALCAB. (And planning for 50th anniversary.)</p> <p>ACME: Need to keep in touch so that we can feed into school curriculum reforms.</p>	
12	Any other business	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH: Need nominees for teaching and research committees of LMS (following elections in April). • SH: Council for the defence of British universities well worth looking at. http://cdbu.org.uk/ • The Committee thanked the outgoing Chair (DA) and vice Chair (CT) for all their contributions and work over the past few years. 	
11	Date of next meeting: 25 April 2014 at Birmingham at 1.30pm	