

# SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS

## Working Party on Time-Table Issues

Consultation Document  
31/1/2003

The Working Party on Time-Table issues will be meeting formally soon and needs to present a final report to the USC on its meeting on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The USC will need to make a decision on behalf of the School at that meeting regarding the points below. So your input is vital at this stage!

### 1. First year cohort: splitting the class or not?

There are, taking the limitations of the University wide time-table into account, only a limited number of options. The following possibilities affect the courses shared by SH and Joints, i.e. 1A (Mathematics Core), 1C (Computational and Applied Mathematics), 1D (Applicable Mathematics) and the elective 1X (Impact of Mathematics):

- a. Class is kept together, big room is needed.  
*Pro:* not extra lecturing resource required.  
*Contra:* large group teaching not as beneficial as smaller group teaching; need rooms elsewhere on campus.
- b. Class is split, but lectures scheduled at same time.  
*Pro:* this is the only option that allows splitting the class on ability (but splitting small groups of joints may not be recommended, so "group average ability" may have to be used.); common exercises sheets and other tasks easier to manage;  
*Contra:* this requires two members of staff allocated to the same lectures and rooms booked at the same slots;
- c. Class is split but lectures at different time  
This can run in two modes: different lecturers taking the same lectures, or one lecturer "repeating" the same lecture twice. Because of the time-table constraints, all joints, majors (partly) and minors will need to remain booked in the same slot. The split is basically a "Single Honours" vs "Joint Honours" one. Possible scenario's
  - i. G103 split off  
Take the most able with a full maths program off.  
*Pro:* possibility to adjust teaching provision in this group to their needs;  
*Contra:* excludes very good students on partial programmes
  - ii. G100 split off  
*Pro:* again, possibility to adjust teaching provision in this group to their needs;  
*Contra:* excludes weaker students on partial programmes;
  - iii. G100+G103 split off  
*Pro:* allows targetting of provision along SH-JH lines  
*Contra:* SH group still contains complete spectrum in ability.

It would be extremely useful to have your opinions on the pro's/con's of each scheme. Which ones should not be considered at all? What problems can one foresee with each of these?

The remaining first year course, 1B (Foundations and Abstractions) is typically taken by Joint students in their second year (as a compulsory module) and a split along the "level" seems natural, i.e. all single honours plus some majors in one group, joints and minors in the other. Again, comments are invited on these.

2. Second year core: splitting or not?

The large classes will feed through to the core courses in the second year. Should we consider splitting these as well, or are the arguments for a split less strong? One could consider keeping large group lectures but more targeted support, i.e. have a large group of good achievers in an examples class and small groups of weaker students in supervisions. Comments welcome!

3. Standard Maths requirement for teaching provision

We believe the School needs to book rooms (booking deadline is the end of Feb) which satisfy the standards of provision that allows teaching methods we believe our students deserve. The suggestion is that rooms are booked with a "minimal standard of provision" required on educational grounds. This standard will be easier to defend if the School can widely support this. A bare minimum it seems to me would be

Smaller Rooms: 1 OHP plus (and not restricted by the OHPscreen) 2sq. m. of blackboard/whiteboard working space.

Bigger rooms: 1 OHP plus (not restricted by the OHP screen) 4 sq m of blackboard/whiteboard working space.

Again, we need to come to some consensus on these (or more demanding standards) and make a well argued case, so keep your suggestions coming.

4. Grouping of level 3 modules in pairs.

This requires some further technical analysis, but I will put any proposed combinations of mutual exclusive modules to the school for consultation early next week.

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