Unit questionnaires and examination marks feedback

On the whole the responses to this course on the unit questionnaires (106 returned out of 188 students taking the course) were positive and gave the impression that most students had enjoyed the course.

There were various suggestions for ways in which the course could be improved.

Course content. There were two or three suggestions that the course was too theoretical and it was suggested that it was not sufficiently clear in advance that this is a pure course. A couple of people commented that the early material on limits was rather confusing with all the reference back to earlier material. One person would have liked less time spent on the early material with more material on forms and integration. I too would like to get through the earlier material more quickly particularly when it is very similar to the one variable material. I use the supplementary notes to try and get through this material as quickly as I can but I really don’t see how to do it more quickly. This course relies heavily on material in earlier courses and it seems desirable to be absolutely clear about what is being used without going over it all again. I think that the nature of the course is clear from the course description.

Lectures. There was a request for more examples and there was a comment that the course was rather rushed at the end. I think that with the problem sheets and the tutorial sheets and past examinations there are quite a lot of examples. I am sorry that the timing went a little wrong this year. The course is intended to gradually speed up with lots of time spent on the basic material in the first half so that all students have a good chance of getting on top of this.

Podcasts. Some of these were missing. It was suggested that I write on the visualizer so that material can be seen in the podcasts. I am sorry that there were some technical problems with the podcasts. This was the first time I had made use of them and I did not appreciate that the microphone would not automatically be on. I don’t find visualizers very easy to use as the space available is so small. The University is now experimenting with some technology which will video lectures automatically including the material on the blackboards.

Problem sheets. One person asked for longer problem sheets to provide material for revising. As stated above there are quite a lot of problems available.

Support classes. One person said that these were not very helpful. Another suggested that students should be asked to go up to the board. One said that material was too easy. However, most students were very positive about these classes. I deliberately concentrate on the basic material with relatively simple questions. If students wanted individual support there were usually times in the class when they could ask about things and I have two hours of office hours each week.

General. Other suggestions are that notes should be posted earlier, it should be made clear that this is a pure course and lectures should not be given in Stopford. I am sorry if the notes were sometimes a bit late. I think that the course description makes the nature of the course clear. I have unfortunately no control over where lectures are given. The policy is to have them near to Alan Turing if there is a suitable room available.
Examination. The examination marks came out very high and in retrospect the examination was a little too straightforward. However, I was pleased that most students had mastered the basic ideas of the course and there were relatively few poor marks. The standard School procedures for seeking to make marks for different courses comparable meant that the marks for the course did have to be adjusted. Marks up of 40 were unchanged. Then a mark of 82 was scaled to 70 since the students with a mark below 82 made too many basic errors to be considered first class. Marks between 40 and 82 were then scaled linearly. Similarly there was a linear scaling for marks between 82 and 100 with 100 mapping to 100.

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