Response to 2014–15’s Unit Questionnaire for
MATH35032: Mathematical Biology

These notes are based on 24 responses from a class of 59 students, so just over 40%. The numerical parts of the questionnaire are rather better than I’d feared, given that the lectures in the post-Easter period were heavily disrupted.

- Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent: 62% agree or mostly agree
- The feedback on my work was helpful: 50% agree or mostly agree
- The unit was well-organised: 75% agree or mostly agree
- The course materials were helpful: 75% agree or mostly agree
- Support classes were helpful: 75% agree or mostly agree
- eLearning resources were helpful: 55% agree or mostly agree
- Teaching was excellent: 75% agree or mostly agree

The response rate was rather lower—only 12 or 13 responses per question—for the written parts of the questionnaire, but these answers are especially helpful in that they suggest things on which to focus when trying to improve the module:

Printed lecture notes Students would like these to be available earlier and to all be presented in the same style. I had intended to complete this job for this year’s version of the course, but two deaths among my family and friends meant that I wasn’t able to finish typing up my notes. I plan to have a complete set ready at the beginning of next year’s version.

What is examinable? I don’t really divide up the course in these terms in my own mind, so it would be difficult to do so for students. In addition to the old exams, which provide a good guide to the type and even the content of questions I tend to ask, I also highlight which problems from the Problem Sets are especially pertinent to the exam.

Get the coursework back more quickly I used a postgraduate marker for the first time this year and the experiment was pretty successful, so I hope to be able to build on that experience for next year and turn the papers around more quickly.

Assume less prior knowledge In all but the last two weeks, the module doesn’t require anything more sophisticated than Linear Algebra or tools from the first year Calculus modules, but I understand that students may be a bit rusty with this material and will aim to do a better job of refresh their memories.