

Contents

News from HoS

This Week

School Events

External Events

Funding Opps

Prize & Award Opps

Research Awards

Staff News

Vacancies

Links

News Submissions

[Newsletter Archive](#)

School Strategy

School Intranet

School Seminars

ESNW Seminars

NaCTeM Seminars

News from Head of School

Staff Loads

Following-on from the article on academic staff departures in the previous newsletter, this article discusses staff loads and the steps that either are being taken or may yet be taken to ensure that they do not get out of hand. If you have additional ideas, or comments on this message, I will be happy to hear them. There was an initial discussion at the school board last week, but this can certainly be continued.

Several years ago, before the likely impact of the credit crunch was clear, it was agreed by the Profs that we would seek to reduce academic staff numbers by 5, in a setting where it was less than clear how we could attract sufficient students to support the staff base. The following table describes how student numbers and staff student ratios have changed in recent years (the 2011/12 figures are estimates based on entry targets, and include UG and PGT but not PGR students):

| Year | Student Numbers | Academic Staff Numbers | Ratio |
|---------|-----------------|------------------------|-------|
| 2011/12 | 791 | 57 | 14:1 |
| 2010/11 | 779 | 63 | 12:1 |
| 2009/10 | 732 | 69 | 11:1 |

Looking at the impact of the associated numbers growth on loads, the following are predicted measures for 2011/12 for activities that grow fairly directly with increasing numbers of students and reducing numbers of staff:

| Measured Item | Number | Number Per Academic |
|------------------|--------|---------------------|
| Year 1 Tutorials | 39 | 0.7 |
| Year 3 Projects | 162 | 2.7 |
| MSc Projects | 172 | 3.0 |

The above figures assume that all staff are equally available for all duties, and inevitably some are on sabbatical or have special circumstances (e.g. some staff are new and are on reduced loads), whereas some are not research active and thus carry higher teaching or administrative loads. These figures suggest that tutorial loads are manageable, but that many members of staff will be supervising 7 or more undergraduate and masters students during the second semester, which is a lot of diary slots. Thus we need to ensure that we make sensible decisions to manage overall load, the most obvious target for which seems to be to ensure that the number of course units we teach is kept under control. The following are the numbers of face-to-face units taught by the school in recent years:

| Year | Undergraduate Units | Postgraduate Units | Units per Academic FTE |
|---------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 2011/12 | 57 | 31 | 1.5 |
| 2010/11 | 58 | 36 | 1.5 |
| 2009/10 | 58 | 27 | 1.2 |

Overall, this suggests that our numbers of units per academic remain manageable; they are certainly much better than in most other Computer

Science departments. However, in terms of load-per-unit, we do have a significant number of large units, and the following table provides a summary of unit sizes (for the pedants among you, I know that the total numbers of units don't quite match with the above, but at least the overall pattern should be clear!):

| Size | UG | PGT |
|---------|----|-----|
| 0-24 | 9 | 24 |
| 25-49 | 17 | 6 |
| 49-99 | 13 | 5 |
| 100-150 | 5 | 1 |
| 150-200 | 7 | 0 |
| 200+ | 3 | 0 |

This table implies that we should be expecting the number of masters units to reduce, and this process will start in 2011/12. The faculty has a policy of not running units with fewer than 15 students, and we are moving towards compliance with this policy for face-to-face units. Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 we will drop two masters programmes with small numbers of students for which we offered 6 units of programme-specific teaching. We are also in the process of moving Computer Systems Engineering to a single-honours format, which will remove 3 custom units in forthcoming years. For 2012/13 the new UG and PGT programmes will be reviewed in the light of experience with two complete cohorts, and themes that have not attracted sufficient students should be dropped. As such, we should expect to reduce the numbers of units per academic in 2012/13 compared with 2011/12. Of course, this may mean dropping or merging units that people are enthusiastic about and/or that have been introduced recently. This, however, is the price that has to be paid to ensure that we operate efficiently.

Overall, although times are more challenging than they have been for at least a decade, this article is intended to be reassuring. We have just gone through the very significant cost of redeveloping our undergraduate and masters programmes. This means that our programmes now look to be in good shape, and this is reflected in a strengthening admissions position. This also means that we can look forward to a period of more stable teaching offerings; the duties allocation process will assign around 4000 hours fewer hours for unit teaching in 2011/12 than in 2010/11, reflecting the fact that there are almost no new units in 2011/12 and there were lots in 2010/11 (and the actual cost of preparing new material is not fully captured in the loading model).

We are also starting the process of looking at how we do what we do; there is perhaps a risk that we over-teach our students, and we need to establish if all lab assessment points and all exams are contributing to the educational experience. Watch this space, in the first instance for some statistics, and subsequently for consultation on actions.

JISC Scholarly Survey

You are invited to complete the JISC scholarly survey investigating the value and use of scholarly information resources. The project involves six UK universities and focuses on the views of academics and research associates about the value they place on access to resources such as journals, books and databases.

The survey, which takes about 15 minutes to complete, will provide qualitative evidence of how scholarly readings support teaching and research activities. It is intended to help universities to justify continued expenditure on these resources.

The survey can be accessed here:

Events

Proving Program Termination 23 Mar 11

Prof Daniel Kroening. University of Oxford
14:15, Lecture Theatre 1.4, Kilburn Building
[Seminar information](#)

Royal Society Computing in Schools Project 24 Mar 11

Please note the School will pay travelling expenses for people who want to attend the relevant event.

In summer 2010, the Royal Society announced the start of a project investigating the way that computing is taught in schools. The project is supported by 24 organisations from across the computing community including learned societies, professional bodies, universities and industry, and represents an unprecedented drawing together of common interests in this area.

Following a call for evidence in late 2010 which attracted over 120 responses, there will be a series of stakeholder engagement events which will enable participants to contribute further to the project, and to explore the major themes and issues emerging from the evidence received.

Audience: Higher Education Institutions.

Date and location: 24 March, Queens Hotel, Leeds.

Timings: 10:30-16:30.

[Further info](#)

10th e-Science All Hands Meetings 2011, York, UK 26-29 Sept 11

Call for Abstracts

The tenth e-Science All Hands Meeting (AHM) will be held from 26th-29th September 2011, in the historic city of York, United Kingdom. The conference will feature keynote presentations, workshop sessions, poster presentations and demonstrations, from the domains of e-Science, e-Social science and the arts and humanities.

Workshops and Tutorials

The 2011 All Hands Meeting has scheduled time for a limited number of half day workshops. Interested parties may submit proposals for workshops (1 A4 page) to tom.jackson@cs.york.ac.uk. The deadline for workshop proposals is 3rd April 2011.

Important Dates:

23 May 2011 - Deadline for abstract submission

25 July 2011 - Decisions to authors.

[Website](#)

Research Awards

Open-PHACTS

PI: Carole Goble

CI: Robert Stevens, Steve Pettifer

Funder: EC

Amount: €1371944