FLTQC 28 January 2026

Wednesday, 28th January 2026 10:15am

Teams | Faculty of Science Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

Attendees

Attended

John Benardis (JB)

Yarden Brody (YB)

Zoe Burke (ZB)

Andy Burrows (Chair)

Susan Crennell (SC)

James Foadi (JF)

Paula Gabriel (Observer)

Marguerite Hallett (Secretary)

Liz Haynes (Observer)

Nikki Hodgson (NH)

Merrilee Hurn (MH)

Penn Mackintosh (PM)

Barrie Marsh (BM)

Sarah Paine (Observer)

Ben Ralph (BR)

Gan Shermer (GS)

Arya Wood (AW)

Did Not Attend

Florin Bisset

Sumukh Chaluvaraju

Momna Hejmadi

Charareh Pourzand

Philip Rogers

Tony Shardlow

1.0 Welcome and Quorum (3484)

The Chair welcomed members, noted apologies and observed that the meeting was quorate.

2.0 Declaration of Interest (3485)

There were no declarations of any potential conflicts of interest.

3.0 Online MSc Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Major Change Proposal (3486)

BR presented this item.
The Board considered the following documentation:
• Cover paper (Paper 46A).
• Current MSc Computer Science course specification (Paper 46B).
• Revised MSc Computer Science course specification (Paper 46C).
• PG Certificate Computer Science course specification (Paper 46D).
• PG Diploma Computer Science course specification (Paper 46E).
• Current MSc Artificial Intelligence course specification (Paper 46F).
• Revised MSc Artificial Intelligence course specification (Paper 46G).
• PG Certificate Artificial Intelligence course specification (Paper 46H).
• PG Diploma Artificial Intelligence course specification (Paper 46I).
• Current Computer Science unit specifications (Paper 46J).
• Revised Computer Science unit specifications (Paper 46K).
• Current Artificial Intelligence unit specifications (Paper 46L).
• Revised Artificial Intelligence unit specifications (Paper 46M).
• Updated CILO mapping (Paper 46N).
• Current course-level assessment mapping (Paper 46O).
• Updated course-level assessment mapping (Paper 46P).
BR explained that there are 2 parts to the proposal:
1. To introduce PG Cert (60 CATS) and PG Dip (120 CATS) entry points, primarily to boost recruitment.
2. Alignment of the MSc (and new entry awards) to Curriculum Transformation principles by introducing 20 CATS units. Where possible, existing 10 CATS units have been combined and redeveloped to ensure coherence. New content has also been introduced.
Under the current structure, the dissertation phase carries 70 credits. This means that students exiting with a PG Dip must complete the 10-credit Research Project Preparation unit, but not the 60-credit Dissertation, in order to reach the required 120 CATS. In the revised structure, the dissertation phase has been reduced to 60 CATS, making it the key distinction between the PGDip and MSc, through the consolidation of the Dissertation and Research Project Preparation units. The courses are delivered asynchronously, with no fixed weekly lectures, allowing students to study largely at their own pace. Students may complete the Dissertation at either a standard or accelerated pace. Managing these different pathways is easier within a single unit than maintaining a separate Research Project Preparation unit.
BR reported that the proposal had been developed in consultation with the Department, Risepoint, the LPO, students and External Examiners.
The Chair enquired about progress in determining the lower entry requirements for the PG Cert and PG Dip in comparison with those for the MSc, as referenced in Paper 46A (p.2). BR clarified that the entry requirements would be broader, rather than lower. BR explained that this approach was informed by the Department's experience of the Degree Apprenticeship programme, on which students without an undergraduate degree, but with relevant professional experience or technical qualifications, had performed well. The focus would therefore be on applicants who could demonstrate suitability for the course in a broader sense than the usual criteria. Such applicants would enter initially on the PG Cert, with their early progress assessed for the possibility of progressing to the PG Dip or MSc. The Chair noted that such decisions would likely be made on an individual basis.
The Chair also noted that fees for the PG Cert and PG Dip would be calculated on the basis of

a fixed amount per 10 credits, yet each unit would carry 20 credits. BR explained that the fees for 20-credit units would either be split into two equal payments (as is currently the case for the 60-credit Dissertation unit) or paid in full upfront. The operational details would be finalised in the coming months.

SC highlighted that the possibility of progression from the PG Cert to the PG Dip or MSc was not currently specified in the PG Cert Course Specification.

It was noted that the number of Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) exceeded the usual maximum of 12. BR explained that no changes were currently proposed, as the CILOs had originally been designed to align with the requirements of the British Computer Society (BCS), which accredits the Department's undergraduate courses. BR acknowledged some possible repetition within the CILOs and indicated that they could be reviewed in future.

The Committee noted that the new entry awards had been approved by the Board of Studies and would next be considered by APC.

The Committee agreed to approve, prior to consideration by CPAC on 4 March, the proposed major programme change to the online MSc Computer Science and MSc Artificial Intelligence courses for 2026/27, including the introduction of PG Cert and PG Dip entry awards, subject to the inclusion within the PG Cert Course Specifications of the possibility of progression to the PG Dip or MSc.

Action: BR to amend the PG Cert Course Specifications to include the possibility of progression to the PG Dip or MSc and the PG Dip Course Specifications to include the possibility of progression to the MSc.

4.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (3487)

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2025 (Paper 47A) and decision made by correspondence (Paper 47B).

5.0 Matters Arising (3488)

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

6.0 Chair's Business (3489)

The Chair brought to the attention of the Committee the following Chair's actions:

- Approval of a 20-credit equivalent (SL52162) to the Semester 2 18-credit project unit (SL40315), both of which are only available to visiting students (approved 2 December 2025) (no paper).
- Approval of MPharm + Year 0 at Plymouth GPhC annual monitoring submission (approved 19 December 2025) (Paper 48).
- Approval of a change to BSc (Hons) Mathematics and Physics (and placement & SYA variants) for 2026/27: replacement of optional unit MA32066 with MA32067 in Semester 2, subject to the addition of PH32043 as a forbidden combination with MA32067 (approved 5 January 2026) (Paper 49A).
- Approval of a change to MSci (Hons) Mathematics and Physics (and placement & SYA variants) for 2026/27: replacement of optional unit MA52089 with MA52090 in Semester 2, subject to the addition of PH32043 as a forbidden combination with MA52090 (approved 5 January 2026) (Paper 49B).
- Approval of a new Year-Long Integrated Team Project unit for 2026/27 (Paper 50A) (approved 5 January 2026) for inclusion in BSc (Hons) Mathematics (Paper 50B) & BSc (Hons) Mathematics and Statistics (Paper 50C) (including placement and SYA variants) (approved 7 January 2026).

- Approval of change of MA52090 from S1 to S2 for 2026/27, and addition of PH32043 as a forbidden combination (Paper 51A) and change of MA52089 from S2 to S1 (Paper 51B) (approved 7 January 2026).
- Approval of change of MA32067 from S1 to S2 for 2026/27, and addition of PH32043 as a forbidden combination (Paper 52A) and change of MA32066 from S2 to S1 (Paper 52B) (approved 7 January 2026).
- Approval of a change to Integrated PhD Statistical Applied Mathematics for 2026/27: replacement of optional unit MA52090 with MA52089 in Semester 1 (approved 7 January 2026) (Paper 53).
- Approval of a change to MPharm (Hons) Pharmacy (Bath and Plymouth) Course Specification for 2026/27 to include a statement that a) Students are liable for the costs of any vaccinations which they do not have that are required in order to attend clinical placements and b) A financial contribution towards students' travel and accommodation in relation to their practice learning opportunities, may be available to them from the NHS Learning Support Fund (approved 12 January 2026) (Paper 54).
- Approval of Department of Physics programme regulations (approved 14 January 2026) (Paper 55).

7.0 Education Action Plans (EAPs): Faculty Level Concerns (standing agenda item) (3490)

JB reported that he has begun transferring items to the Education Action Plan (EAP) in preparation for the Education Annual Review and Enhancement (EARE). He highlighted an issue encountered when attempting to add actions to both UG and PGT sections. NH explained that the EAP must be opened in the app, rather than via the browser, after which the UG and then PGT options can be selected.

The Chair invited members to raise any further issues with the EAP template to ensure it is user-friendly and avoids duplication. NH added that while staff are able to edit the template themselves, it would be helpful if any changes were communicated to her so that these could be incorporated into the standard template for wider use, e.g. the addition of a new dropdown or accrediting body data source.

The Committee noted the Faculty deadline of 20 February for completion of EAREs. The Chair flagged that EAREs are not intended to duplicate the EAPs; instead, reference to the EAP may be made within the EARE.

The Chair reminded members that EAPs must form a standing item on DLTQC agendas, as mandated by EQSC, even where there is minimal discussion. NH reported that she has already attended some DLTQC meetings within the Faculty and offered to attend further meetings to explain the EAP, its purpose, or related matters.

8.0 Monitoring of Timeliness of Feedback (standing agenda item) (3491)

The Chair reported that DoTs had provided an update in weeks 9-10 of Semester 1 indicating that, at that point, all feedback had been returned within the required timeframe. This full compliance was welcomed. However, as many coursework deadlines had not yet passed at this checkpoint, the Chair requested a further update from departments on current levels of compliance.

JB reported that, within the Department of Computer Science, feedback had been provided within the required timeframe in the majority of cases. There had been a small number of instances where feedback had been returned one working day late, due to internal moderation processes aimed at ensuring feedback quality and usefulness for students. JB added that

where there are large student cohorts or group submissions, the uploading process may take additional time. The Department is working to identify such procedural issues at an earlier stage in order to mitigate them. AW commented that students generally prefer high-quality feedback, even if received one or two days after the deadline, rather than lower-quality feedback delivered on time. Such minor delays are not considered problematic from a student perspective where they are necessary to ensure feedback quality.

MH reported that, within the Department of Mathematical Sciences, compliance had been achieved provided that the Christmas vacation for students is not counted as 'working days'. The Chair noted that the definition of 'working days' is currently under review as part of planned revisions to QA16 for next academic year. In the interim, staff are required to comply with the existing requirement of 'three semester weeks' as set out in QA16. The Chair added that it is likely to be considered unreasonable to count periods when the University is closed as 'working days'. JB commented that 'three semester weeks' may be interpreted as including assessment and revision weeks, but excluding University vacations, public holidays and the inter-semester break.

GS reported that, within the Department of Chemistry, all feedback had been returned on time to date. Although there had been a large number of assessment deadlines at the end of week 11, the Department had chosen not to return feedback during the assessment period, when students were focused on examinations. As a result, assessment weeks are not included in the Department's interpretation of 'three semester weeks'. This approach was clearly communicated in all assessment briefs to ensure that students were aware that feedback would be provided at the start of Semester 2.

ZB reported that, within the Department of Life Sciences, feedback had been provided on time based on communications with Unit Convenors regarding specific assessments. As in Chemistry, marks and feedback were held back until after the examination period.

YB reported that, within the Department of Physics, all feedback had been returned on time to her knowledge, and that no issues had been raised.

SC reported that the majority of assessment feedback for Natural Sciences is provided by contributing departments. While it may be possible to monitor the timeliness of feedback for Natural Sciences students, this could be onerous in terms of workload. ZB reported that tracking spreadsheets are currently used within Pharmacy, Pharmacology and Biosciences. However, these rely on Unit Convenors entering dates and confirming when feedback has been provided. The Chair requested that these spreadsheets be shared for consideration of possible wider adoption across departments.

The Chair reported that, following last year's pilot with the Departments of Chemistry and Physics, all departments are on track to release provisional Semester 1 results early this year, after the BEUs, rather than on the standard University results release date of 26 February. ZB relayed concerns raised by DoSs regarding workload and the potential for error, but confirmed that the Department of Life Sciences was willing to trial the early release. GS explained that the most time-consuming task is the careful checking of the results spreadsheet produced by the Programmes Administrator. Results are then released cohort by cohort, allowing any issues to be identified early and in stages, via an automated email sent to students at the touch of a button. GS recommended sending test emails first, e.g. to DoSs, to minimise the risk of incorrect emails being sent to students. She also advised that DoTs email students in advance to explain that, in response to student feedback, the Department is trialling early release of Semester 1 marks to enhance the student experience. This may help students understand that the process is a trial and that official results will still be released via SAMIS on the standard results day if any issues arise. GS noted that the template email included in the shared Power Automate flow is based on the message she sent to students last year.

MH reported that the Department of Mathematical Sciences plans to release Semester 1 results early for Years 3-5 only, excluding Years 1 and 2 due to the volume of units and students involved. The Chair agreed that this was a sensible initial approach. It was noted that for joint degrees, e.g. Chemistry and Management; Mathematics and Economics, students should be informed that early results will be released only for units belonging to courses owned by the relevant department. It was also noted that last year Chemistry and Physics marks were not

released early to Natural Sciences students, as it was considered that receiving only partial results could have a negative impact on mental health. However, partial results for year-long units were provided on the University's Semester 1 results day, outside of SAMIS, alongside full marks for Semester 1 units.

The Chair expressed hope that this year's early release would act as a stop-gap, with the longer term aim of enabling earlier Semester 1 mark release via SAMIS from next year. Registry are receptive to this but deemed that it was too early to implement in the current year. Some general lack of confidence was expressed regarding the use of Power Automate. BM explained that Power Automate populates a template email using data from the spreadsheet, and that accuracy depends on correct flow setup and data entry. BM added that support is available through the Power Automate Teams community and Microsoft Copilot, and the Chair noted that a step-by-step setup video had been shared with staff.

AW commented that they had benefited from early release of results last year and noted that receiving partial marks for year-long laboratory units would be particularly helpful, especially where these consist of many small coursework components. MH highlighted that while mitigation is recorded in the spreadsheet, any scaling of marks requires mitigation to be re-entered. In response to concerns about the risk of incorrect results being sent to students, PM observed that errors can occur even on the standard results release day, and argued that it is better to learn from mistakes than to avoid improvements due to fear of things going wrong.

GS added that last year she had emailed the Head of Student Support to notify them that the Department would be releasing Semester 1 results early, specifying a cut-off time on Friday to manage any potential student queries, as the email template includes links to Student Support for students concerned about their results. She suggested that, this year, a single email be sent to the Head of Student Support to inform them that the whole Faculty is likely to release Semester 1 results early. The Chair agreed to take this forward.

9.0 Moodle CT Exploratory Review (3492)

JF signposted staff to a report on Assessment and Feedback Good Practice in the Faculty, available from the Faculty's Assessment and Feedback Teams page. The good practice was identified through a CT exploratory review conducted over the summer, which aimed to examine how the 11 Assessment for Learning Design Principles are being implemented at unit level. Moodle was used as the primary source of evidence for the review.

JF explained that, in his role as the Faculty's Assessment and Feedback Lead, he had been tasked by EQSC, as part of the University's Assessment and Feedback Development Plan, with undertaking this benchmarking exercise. The purpose of the exercise is to establish a baseline for assessment and feedback provision to support future monitoring. The review focused on Year 1 and 2 CT units, with data collected by two PG students from the Faculty. The key themes emerging from the analysis are outlined in the report.

JF requested to conduct follow-up informal interviews of approximately 20-30 minutes with DoTs, and DoSs where they wish to be involved, to complete the analysis. This would allow for the identification of any missing information or areas requiring revision, after which a final report would be circulated.

10.0 Degree Apprenticeship Quarterly Monitoring Report (3493)

The Committee noted the MSc Computer Science Degree Apprenticeship Quarterly Monitoring Report (August - October 2025) (Paper 56).

11.0 Feedback from Committees (3494)

Academic Programmes Committee (APC):
The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2025 (Paper 57), in particular approval of the BSc / MMath (Hons) Mathematics, BSc (Hons) Mathematics and Statistics, and BSc (Hons) Mathematics, Statistics and Data Science with Study Year Abroad major change proposal for 2027/28.

Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC):
The Committee noted the minutes of the meetings held on:
a) 22 October 2025 (Paper 58A).
b) 3 December 2025 (Paper 58B), in particular approval of new student exchange proposal between the Faculty of Science and Universitè Grenoble Alpes from 2026/27.

Education Advisory Board (EAB):
The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2025 (Paper 59).

Student Experience Advisory Board (SEAB):
The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2025 (Paper 60).

12.0 Department Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (DLTQC) Minutes (3495)

The Committee noted the minutes of the meetings held on:
Department of Life Sciences: 5 November (Paper 61A) and 8 December (Paper 61B) 2025.
Department of Chemistry: 19 November (Paper 62A) and 17 December (Paper 62B) 2025.
Department of Computer Science: 22 October (Paper 63A) and 26 November (Paper 63B) 2025.
Department of Mathematical Sciences: 3 December 2025 (Paper 64).
Department of Physics: 11 November 2025 (Paper 65).
The Chair noted many good practice examples of departments implementing changes in response to student feedback and encouraged DoTs to ensure that all students are informed of these actions, as part of effectively closing the feedback loop, particularly with the NSS launching on 2 February.

13.0 Any Other Business (3496)

The Chair recalled that the Committee had a lengthy discussion, around this time last year, regarding examination venues, e.g. large lecture theatres being used despite being unsuitable due to a lack of alternative spaces. The Chair asked if members wished to raise any other matters. YB reported multiple minor issues with the Exams Office, exacerbated by slow responses. The Chair invited members to email him with any concerns, such as the total number of calculators, for him to raise with the Exams Office.