ZOOM OUT

POLICY ON UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING MATERIALS (SEP 2015)

This policy is intended to be consistent with the London Mathematical Society position on the teaching and assessment of mathematics degrees and with the Disability Discrimination Act. It was approved at the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting on 26th May 2010. Square brackets indicate explanatory comments that are not strictly part of the policy.

Francis Wright, Director of Undergraduate Studies, June 2010 – updated September 2015

MOTIVATION

This policy is intended to support our mission to teach our students in ways that are appropriate for them, given that we accept students with a range of abilities and interests. Different people learn differently and we need to accommodate that diversity. Excellent lectures alone may not be sufficient for all learners. We aim to provide high levels of teaching support to all our students.

POLICY

General

1. This policy applies to undergraduate Mathematical Sciences modules at levels 4, 5 and 6 (namely those with codes MTH4???, MTH5??? and MTH6???).

2. Module organisers should make the teaching materials described below accessible online to students via QMplus. The preferred format for mathematical documents is PDF. Module organisers may additionally provide sufficient copies of exercise questions on paper to meet any demand, but other teaching materials should normally be provided only via QMplus.

3. Module organisers should ensure each year that their primary teaching materials reflect the way they currently teach the module, rather than the way it was taught in the past. Module organisers may also provide background material that does not relate closely to the current module provided this is clearly stated.

4. Module organisers should be aware of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act to make all teaching materials accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.

5. Module organisers are encouraged to provide most online teaching materials in a character-encoded rather than a bitmapped format, in order to maximize accessibility. For example, PDF generated from TeX source is a good choice. [Module organisers may be required to provide accessible teaching materials in specific formats, possibly at short notice, if for example they have a student with serious visual impairment.]

6. The School will have ultimate responsibility for converting or reformatting character-encoded documents to facilitate access by specific disabled students if requested to do so by the Queen Mary Disability and Dyslexia Service. It will be the responsibility of module organisers to produce the character-encoded documents.

Lecture notes

1. Lecturers should provide lecture notes covering all delivered examinable material within normally two weeks after each lecture. Published lecture notes need not include examples given in lectures.

2. The published lecture notes should provide a coherent and intelligible presentation of the material. The lectures themselves may present the same material slightly differently, provided that the lectures and notes follow the same sequence.

3. A lecturer teaching a module for the first time may, if absolutely necessary, defer provision of online lecture notes, but a first draft should be available by the end of the vacation following the semester in which the module is taught.

Exercises

1. Module organisers should provide sets of exercise questions to illuminate the material they are teaching, as required by the School's current minimum performance criteria and support teaching policy.

2. Faculty policy is that all assessments should carry the date on which students can expect feedback and the type of feedback, e.g. class feedback by *date*, personal feedback by *date*. Module organisers should include feedback dates on all exercise sheets and on their QMplus module pages; feedback dates may be relative to submission deadlines.

3. Questions that will provide summative assessment (i.e. count for credit) should be varied from year to year and the necessary care taken in variations so that students cannot copy from previous years' solutions.

4. Module organisers should normally provide model solutions to at least the routine questions in each set of exercises no later than the day the assessed coursework in that set of exercises is returned to students.

5. Module organisers are encouraged to include alternative ways of answering questions (which should deter students from trying to memorize solutions) and provide information to students about how model solutions can be used most effectively for checking their own work.

Examinations

1. Module organisers should provide PDF copies of past papers for examinations sat in the main examination period for the past three years (or as many as exist if less) for inclusion in our past exam paper repository in QMplus. [Module organisers may also provide access to past papers in other ways if they wish.]

2. For every module with a final written examination, module organisers should provide the following information on their module QMplus pages, normally by about half way through the semester in which the module is taught and at the very latest by the end of the semester:

    At all levels, a statement of the examination rubric to be used for the current year, including the duration of the examination and whether it is closed or open book.

    At level 6 and lower, questions are also required in the form of either an actual past examination paper, a sample examination paper or a set of sample examination questions, which might be a subset of the exercise or test questions used during the semester.

    In all cases, a past examination paper will suffice unless either the module details or the style of the examination has changed from the previous year, in which case either a sample paper or a set of sample questions should be provided that reflect the current module and proposed style of exam. For past examination papers, a link to our past exam paper repository in QMplus will suffice.

Background reading

1. Unless full lecture notes are provided weekly, each section (of between one and four weeks) of a module should be accompanied by guidance on background material, such as which sections to read in which set of notes or textbook.

2. All references to published material should be good examples of correct referencing, and should include author, title, publisher and date.

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