



18 January 2017

Dear All,

I am writing to you in my role as the Chairman of the Examiners for the MSc in Mathematics and Foundations of Computer Science. In setting up the course, the Supervisory Committee agreed that lecturers would be assessors and required to set one “mini project” which should be given out to the candidates by the course administrator on Monday of Week 8. The candidate is expected to hand in the assignment by Monday of Week 11 of the vacation. Marks need to be with the examiners by week 0 of the term.

The examiners hope to receive suggested projects by the Monday of Week 5 so that they can aim at some level of equality.

This is to give you advance warning and more time to think about these projects.

As soon as I know for certain whether or not your course is being offered and that projects will be needed I will notify you. This will be no later than Monday of Week 4.

If you would like an idea of what is required in a typical project I suggest you contact Monica Kundan Finlayson, Academic Administration Office, Mathematical Institute who has copies of the projects used last year. You may find the following points helpful:

- i) A student will be doing 3 or 4 projects in the period Monday Week 8 - Monday Week 11. Hence what we would like is that the average MSc student should be able to work for 3-4 days on the project and make steady progress to demonstrate their understanding. What we don't want is a problem of the type which can be solved in an afternoon (or less) or not at all.
- ii) The length of an answer should not normally be more than 10 pages but of course this is difficult to make precise because of the different style in handwriting.
- iii) We are telling the students that we do not want their unedited unstructured thoughts but that the project should take the form of a mathematical report on their progress.
- iv) We do not want a regurgitation of bookwork but otherwise the project can take quite different forms.
- v) The emphasis is to ascertain competence and understanding of the broad aims and techniques of the course, rather than manipulative skills. Our fundamental aim is to ensure a certain awareness (but not brilliance) in the subject.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Jonathan Barrett  
Chairman of Examiners