1 Present

Jasmine Grosso 3rd Year PhD Representative, CDT (Interim Chair)
Isabella Slattery 4th Year PhD Representative, CDT (SSLC Chair)
David Purser 4th Year PhD Representative
Marcel de Sena Dall’Agnol 1st Year Representative
Richard Kirk 4th Year PhD Representative
Teddy Cunningham 2nd Year PhD Representative
Dr. Sara Kalvala SSLC Convenor
Sharon Howard Departmental and PG Secretary
Aparajita Haldar 2nd Year PhD Representative
Mike Joy Senior Tutor
Sam Coy 1st Year PhD Representative
Paolo Turrini STP coordinator
Tanaya Guha STP convenor
Maria Ovens Head of Administration
Florin Ciucu Head of PGR studies

2 Absent

Ruqayya Awan was absent with apologies.

3 Corrections and Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting
Held on 15th May 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record with no amendments.
4 Election of Chair and Secretary

Aparajita Haldar was elected as chair and. Sam Coy was elected as secretary. Both Isabella Slattery and Jasmine Grosso are stepping down from their roles as chair and secretary respectively. No objections were raised.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

With regards to individual meeting spaces being made available on campus, a suggestion was raised to use supervisors offices. Since the last meeting the 4th floor area in CDT space has been rearranged, and so there is some space that could be used there. [ Action Point (Aparajita Haldar) ] will circulate an email about this space.

6 PhD Issues

Paper towels have been removed from the toilets as a money saving measure, which has caused skin issues in some people. Paper towels have been restored in one male bathroom for an individual medical needs. If paper towels are required in other bathrooms, this needs to be reported as a medical need so that they can be restored.

7 Annual Reviews

Annual reviews have not all been completed yet; in Computer Science less than half have taken place, and in the CDT the majority have taken place but not all feedback has been returned

There is to be PGR committee meeting to approve meetings that have taken place

Action Point (Sharon Howard) will send reminders out about this.

8 STP Update

A STP meeting with PhD students took place two weeks ago. Among the items discussed was teaching assistant allocation, included what changes could be made next year.

In general TA allocation was successful. The web form is still being used and makes the process easier.

It is not certain who will carry on as STP coordinator

There is lots of pressure on the few PhD students who want to teach, as there are not enough PhD students in general. This may improve with more MEng students teaching next year, Paolo Turrini is considering allowing them to mark and do more work in general. There are also a number of teaching assistants hired by the department, as well as PhD students from other departments, which have lightened the load.

It was asked if it is possible to increase the pay to PhD students to make teaching a more attractive option. However, the university sets the pay scales and it is difficult to diverge from these. There have been meetings with Alex Baker, the postgraduate science representative for the SU, and other departments to discuss STP pay but nothing has been achieved.

9 Sessional Tutor Peer Reviews

There has been a mandate from the university enforcing peer to peer assessment of teaching. It was discussed whether to extend this to seminars and labs led by postgraduate students.
It was decided that this could be helpful to improve teaching but may be difficult to get PGR students to take part, considering the difficulties in getting sufficient TAs to begin with. It is uncertain if they would be paid for the peer reviews.

It would be helpful for module organisers to sit in on seminars and labs for the peer reviews, as currently this is uncommon. It was questioned if academics would be amenable to this.

A discussion into the logistics of actually sitting in on a lab, which often consists of one on one conversations and may be hard to perform a peer review in this situation. Peer reviews may be more helpful in seminars because of this.

Labs tend to have a certain structured set of tasks for postgraduates to do. It may be helpful to have observations from time to time to make sure the structure is being followed.

**Action point (Richard Kirk)** is discussing the peer review process with some academics and is aiming to create a teaching policy/guidelines for PGRs on what they are expected to do.

### 10 WPCCS

There have been 73 submissions, which is about 73% of all PGR students, about a third of these were poster submission. This is about the same as last year, but as first years aren’t submitting to WPCCS as this did for the last event this year, this is very good.

Reviews and schedule should be sent out next week.

The event is going to be in the Mathematical Sciences building.

The guest speakers are all arranged.

Food is yet to be arranged

It was decided to encourage MSc students to attend. [Action Point (Aparajita Haldar)] will ask Sharon Hayes for a mailing list.

### 11 Welfare and Communication Committee

Eleanor has stepped down from the committee and SSLC.

**Marcin Jurdziński** is the main academic lead on WCC and Athena Swan

Athena Swan is a gender equality charter mark for STEM subjects, but has lately become involved with all academic disciplines as well as other intersectional issues such as race and trans issues.

CS had a bronze Athena Swan award in 2014. The process of achieving this involves submitting an action plan, which is followed for four years before another plan is submitted, showing which elements of the plan have been achieved. However, there was a lot of changes in the department at the time for resubmitting, so the award ran out and we have to submit a new application.

A staff survey has been carried out and a plan has been put together that was consulted on that a few weeks ago.

The deadline for the award is 30th November.

An invitation was put out to engage in the process. **Maria Ovens, Sara Kalvala, Marcin Jurdziński**, and **Paolo Turrini** would be pleased to have a conversation with anyone for feedback, and would like to hear about lived experiences of minorities in the department.
It was discussed to what extent the report focusses on wellbeing, and if there is anything as a department we should be doing. The largest section is on supporting and helping the careers of women and minorities, for instance things like work culture, the timing of meetings and events, and if HR policies are applied consistently.

**Action point (Aparajita Haldar)** will follow up on creating a welfare committee that is either separate or incorporated into Athena Swan, depending on what works best. She will also try to find a representative for this.

A discussion was had about what in general can be done to keep people in academia, not just necessarily just female academics. Suggestions included:

- Coffee and chat sessions to talk to academics in a less formal setting.
- A day in the life of the academic type events.

### 12 Any Other Business

Previous SSLC meetings have requested to be informed when there is loud building work occurring. On the Saturday after term ends the common room is being taken out which may cause disruption. The barriers on the bridges on floor 4 and 5 are being installed soon, which may also create disruption.

An email from **Roger Packwood** about card access was sent out to the department and some clarification was needed. PGR students will have full access to the buildings but card access will be required after hours.

There have been some changes in healthcare for some students who are funded by EPSRC. Illness pay/maternity pay are now in place for anyone funded by EPSRC, and this is in the process of being rolled out to anyone funded by departments or other research grants.

**Jane Sinclair** has had some PhD students expressing concern to her about the inclusively of the SSLC. It seems that the main issue that students in the main DCS building feel that the SSLC has become very CDT focused. Part of the problem may be that the SSLC needs for official means of advertising when meetings are happening.

**Action point (Aparajita Haldar)** will look into formalising the process of SSLC meetings.

**David Purser** has been redoing the website for PGRs and calls for feedback.

**Action Point (Sharon Howard)** will advertise that the common space in the CDT is for general use to all students now.

The staff meeting happened this term, though there was not much relevance to PGR students. Minutes are not published next.

### 13 Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held one week after the next staff meeting.