

# Agenda for APTS Advisory Committee meeting (AC13) on 12th September, 2019

**Location:** MB 2.22, Mathematical Sciences Building, University of Warwick

**Meeting Begins:** 14:00

(Coffee available from approximately 13:30 in MB 1.02.)

## Overview of topics

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# 1 Minutes of Advisory Committee meeting on 13th September 2018

## 2 Matters arising

### 2.1 From Advisory Committee Meeting AC12

AC12-3: One Alumnus commented that they found *Statistical Inference* unrelatable. This was followed-up in EC13 (EC13-2.2), and it was decided to review module description for *Statistical Inference*, and have discussions of JONTY ROUGIER and SIMON SHAW. Simon has since updated the module description, adding “the ability to critique familiar inference methods” to the course learning outcomes and slightly rejigging the course aims to try and make it more explicit that the course is trying to consider justifications for techniques (which may be familiar). He also plans to provide more examples to increase awareness that justifications are important when considering statistical algorithms.

AC12-3: Problems with accommodation had been raised (students were required to share rooms, but made aware of this only upon arrival). It was decided in EC13 (EC13-8.3) to change guidance notes accompanying call for bids to host APTS weeks 2020/2021 to add (1) the expectation that students will be accommodated in individual study bedrooms will be made explicit and (2) guidance for any organization seeking to secure any sponsorship from external parties will be added. ADAM JOHANSEN did so this year.

AC12-8: After EC12 in 2018 it was communicated to lecturers that the EC had raised some topics as omissions from the APTS syllabus, and lecturers were encouraged to either consider including such material, or to communicate further reading where appropriate. AC12 suggested we seek feedback on this effort, and we can now report such feedback. First, in High-dimensional Statistics, RAJEN SHAH introduced some additional material on kernel machines (definition of positive definite kernels, some examples and a version of the representer theorem). This was well received. Other topics that were considered were boosting and random forests, which were ultimately not included for lack of space as well as Rajen’s reflection that these seemed conceptually less difficult. Second, in Flexible regression, CLAIRE MILLER and TEREZA NEOCLEOUS briefly cover Gaussian processes and functional data analysis. It was decided not to cover neural networks in any detail as it was felt that this did not really fit with the rest of the module. CLAIRE MILLER commented that she would find a module with a more systematic treatment of machine learning useful.

AC12-8: EC12 recommend that we encourage lecturers to consider being more explicit about prerequisites, e.g. point to specific textbooks. AC12 asked for an update on this, which we can now provide: This has been chased up again; now every module has at least one—and usually several—textbook references.

AC12-8: Look into the feasibility of a moderated blog aimed at APTS students about “Things I wish I’d known when I started my PhD”. This was discussed again in EC13 (EC13-2.2) and ADAM JOHANSEN has set up such blog ([iwihtw.wordpress.com](http://iwihtw.wordpress.com)). So far ADAM JOHANSEN, PAUL JENKINS and SHAHIN TAVAKOLI have written each provided some material, and Stefan Stein and James Griffin have agreed to provide student moderation for the first year of operation. Contributions welcome.

### 2.2 From Executive Committee Meeting EC13

EC13-9: module leader succession.

- Matt Roberts has succeeded Stephen Connor and has co-opted Nicholas Georgiou to share delivery of applied stochastic processes.
- Rajen Shah will be succeeded by Yi Yu in the coming academic year.
- Claire Miller and Tereza Neocleous have indicated that this will be the final year in which they deliver their flexible regression module.

EC13-11: regarding the continuation of APTS beyond the present five-year period (from Oct 2021), it was decided that DAVE WOODS forms sub-committee to oversee a bidding process for the role of running

APTS. This is ongoing.

EC13-12: Following a discussion about rotation of modules, it was decided that DAVE WOODS would add in the bidding process the requirement that “the institutions bidding for running APTS should include a description of the basis on which they would anticipate running the academy”. It was decided not to preempt this by making any more substantial changes to the structure of APTS before the next 5 year round of management.

EC13-13.2: Following the suggestion for having a code of conduct for APTS weeks, the APTS management team is currently in consultation with Warwick’s Legal and Compliance services to update our Terms and Conditions with sending institutions concurrently with drafting the Code of Conduct. Then APTS can ensure that it retains the right to cancel its contract with a student’s sending institution in the event that that student is deemed to have breached any Code of Conduct put in place by APTS.

EC13-13.3: It was decided to try online feedback at an APTS week and see how it goes. The online feedback form were updated, and were tested to work well on smartphones/tables. The module leaders were asked to set enough time aside during a lecture to encourage students to fill the online feedback form then. 53 out of 116 (week 2) and 43 out of 118 (week 3) completed the electronic feedback form. PAUL JENKINS noted that when giving his module (in week 3), students had difficulty entering the long URL for the feedback form, and that a short URL should be created. This was implemented for week 4, and the response rate was (include it if possible). PJ to UPDATE

### 3 Report of APTS 2018–2019

For Paul:

- In AC13-report/report-draft.rnw: update manually the feedback summaries for APTS week 4. To do this, put SouthamptonFeedback\_replies.csv and \*\_questions.csv into feedbacks/, and run feedbacks/summarize.R. You can then copy paste relevant lines.
- Check that all parts with 'UPDATE' are updated
- Run Rscript -e 'library(knitr); knit("report-draft.rnw")' to generate report-draft.tex
- Compile report-draft.tex and check if OK; if so, rename pdf file to keep for future records.

### 4 Programme for APTS 2019–2020

1. Cambridge 16-20 December, 2019  
Statistical Computing (Darren Wilkinson)  
Statistical Inference (Simon Shaw)
2. Southampton 30 March - 3 April, 2020  
Applied Stochastic Processes (Nicholas Georgiou and Matt Roberts)  
Statistical Modelling (Helen Ogden)
3. Nottingham 6-10 July, 2020  
High-Dimensional Statistics (Yi Yu)  
Computer Intensive Statistics (Paul Jenkins)
4. Oxford 14-18 September, 2020  
Design of Experiments and Studies (Dave Woods)  
Flexible Regression (Claire Miller and Tereza Neocleous)

Total costs for each week are as follows:

		RAF	RF	R
Cambridge,	16-20 Dec 2019	470	270	160
Southampton,	30 Mar-03 Apr 2020	490	425	160
Nottingham,	06-10 Jul 2020	510	300	160
Oxford,	14-18 Sep 2020	510	290	160

For students who attend all 4 weeks, a rebate of 20% of the total registration fees (20% of  $4 \times 160 = 128$ ) is made at the end of the year.

Note that once places are allocated, cancellations are subject to the APTS billing and cancellation policy

## **5 Dates and Locations for APTS 2020–2021**

1. Cambridge      14–18 December, 2020
2. Durham        19–23 April, 2021
3. Lancaster     12–16 July, 2021
4. Oxford         13–17 September, 2021

## **6 Elections**

### **6.1 Advisory Committee representative to the Executive Committee**

Jochen Einbeck's turn is at an end. He wishes to continue: HOLD ELECTION

## **7 APTS Finances**

EC13-3: Continuation of discussions about APTS account and plans for spending the money, and liaison by ADAM JOHANSEN with all UIs "over possibilities to ensure that all substantially interested parties are properly consulted over any substantial extraordinary expenditure".

## **8 Any other business and general feedback**

### **8.1 Printed Materials**

From JOCHEN EINBECK by email:

Printing of full course material for all APTS students. Really required?  
Cheers,  
Jochen

### **8.2 Date of Next Meeting**

Planned date 10th September 2020, 14:00.