Minutes for APTS Advisory Committee meeting
(AC18) on 12th September 2024

Online via Microsoft Teams and MB1.05, Mathematical Sciences Building, University of Warwick

Present: Anastasia Papavasileiou (Warwick), Dario Spano (APTS Co-director), Finn Lindgren (Edinburgh), Georgios Karagiannis (Durham), Giorgos Minas (St Andrews), Haeran Cho (Bristol), Jere Koskela (Newcastle), Jian Zhang (Kent), Julian Stander (Plymouth), Mengxi Gao (APTS Student representative), Nema Dean (Glasgow), Paul Chleboun (APTS Programme Manager), Paul Jenkins (APTS Co-Director), Simon Shaw (Bath), Vasileios Giagos (Essex), William Salkeld (Nottingham).

Apologies: Andi Wang (APTS Programme Manager), Sergio Bacallado (Camb), Ben Youngman (Exeter) Brendan Murphy (UCD), Jan Palczewski (Leeds), Lloyd Chapman (Lanc).

Meeting Started: 14:00
Meeting Ended: 14:50

Paul Jenkins opened the meeting by welcoming all participants.

1 Minutes of Advisory Committee meeting AC17 on 14th September 2023

The previously circulated minutes were accepted as a true record.

2 Matters arising

2.1 From Advisory Committee Meeting AC16

AC17-8: Recommendations from student feedback
Actions arising from student feedback: 1. Remind lecturers to schedule breaks as appropriate in long lectures. 2. Ask host institutions to consider the timing of the Academy dinner.

Paul Jenkins advised that liaison is continuing with all those involved.

AC17-9: Student grants for Durham APTS week
Jochen Einbeck had stated that the week following the APTS week scheduled to take place in Durham in April 2024, the International Workshop on Statistical Modelling (IWSM) would also take place in Durham (https://maths.dur.ac.uk/iwsm2024/). Durham had announced their plans to offer a small number of Durham summer grants to facilitate students attending both of these events.

These grants, for £300 to cover accommodation between the two events, were subsequently made available and advertised them to the cohort attending the Durham APTS week as well as to APTS alumni via LinkedIn: https://maths.dur.ac.uk/iwsm2024/ppr_awards.html.

Paul Jenkins advised that some students did take up the offer and that Durham kindly covered the accommodation to facilitate staying over the weekend. Our thanks are given to Durham for making these events more accessible to the students.

2.2 From Executive Committee Meeting EC18

EC18-10: Continuing APTS beyond 2026

APTS is managed on a five-yearly basis by a single institution. At the last EC meeting it was agreed that Dave Woods (Southampton) would chair a subcommittee to solicit bids for the management of APTS for the next five-year period, 2026–31, with the intention of a decision being made at the next EC meeting in January 2025.

Paul Jenkins advised that Dave Woods will shortly put out a call for expressions of interest. If anyone is interested in taking over the management, they should speak with the current programme management at Warwick or with Dave Woods. Dave Woods will then make the recommendation at the next meeting.

Paul Jenkins also advised that Dario Spano is stepping down and that Paul Chleboun will take the position of Co-director, as well as his current role as APTS Programme Manager. Our thanks are given to Dario Spano for his work.

3 Report of APTS 2023–2024

Paul Chleboun spoke to the report, shared on screen and circulated previously, giving a summary. He highlighted student numbers are high, but in line with moderate pre-pandemic growth. He pointed out that "2. Did the Oxford R lectures help you with the computer sessions during the week?" should read "Warwick R lectures" and asked to be advised if anyone is aware of any other errors or changes required.

4 Programme for APTS 2024–2025

The following programme was reported.

1. **Oxford 9-13 December, 2024**

   Statistical Inference. (Michael Goldstein)

   Statistical Computing. (Matteo Fasiolo and Anthony Lee)

2. **Durham 22-25 April, 2025***

   Applied Stochastic Processes. (Nicholas Georgiou and Hugo Lo)

   Statistical Modelling. (Ioannis Kosmidis)

3. **Bristol 21-25 July, 2025**

High-Dimensional Statistics. (Po-Ling Loh)

Computer-Intensive Statistics. (Richard Everitt and Andi Wang)

4. **Southampton 1-5 September, 2025**

Causal Inference. (Robin Evans and Vanessa Didelez)

Statistical Machine Learning. (Louis Aslett)

*(note four days rather than five; 21st April 2025 is Easter Monday)

Registration Fees: £170 for each week, with a 20% reduction for students attending all 4 weeks. Accommodation and food / food only costs for each of the weeks will be:

	R	RF	RAF
Oxford	170	410	750
Durham*	170	300	445
Bristol*	170	310	465
Southampton*	170	360	575

*Provisional

Paul Jenkins advised that costs have been creeping up due to inflation, but that costs are still manageable currently. He encouraged bids to be put forward for hosting weeks.

5 Dates and Locations for APTS 2025–2026

The following dates and locations were reported for advanced planning purposes:

1. Oxford   15-19 December, 2025
2. Nottingham 13-17 April, 2026
3. St Andrews 20-24 July, 2026
4. Durham   7-11 September, 2026

As a reminder, it was agreed to move Applied Stochastic Processes from week 2 to week 3 and High-Dimensional Statistics from week 3 to week 2, from 2025–26 onwards.

Paul Jenkins took this opportunity to note that previous discussions at both the AC and EC have affirmed that the current APTS timetable works well, and that holding the first APTS week of the year in December is desirable. However, few institutions are able to bid to host APTS weeks during that period, and we are reliant on the goodwill of a very small number of people. APTS Week 1 has only ever been hosted at Cambridge, Warwick, or Oxford. Institutions are kindly encouraged to place bids to host future APTS weeks with particular attention to offering weeks in December or early January if possible. The committee is reminded that host Departments are paid £1K for organizing a week.

6 Elections

6.1 Advisory Committee representative to the Executive Committee

The two-year terms of the Advisory Committee representatives to the APTS Executive Committee have come to an end. The Committee thanks Brendan Murphy (UC Dublin) and Jonty Rougier for their service. Members of the committee were invited to nominate themselves for these positions.

Paul Jenkins advised that there is at least one vacancy, as Jonty Rougier is stepping down. Brendan Murphy has suggested that he is happy to continue if required. Paul Jenkins asked everyone present to say if they would like to put themselves forward. Jere Koskela volunteered. Nominations for the 2-year positions are therefore Brendan Murphy and Jere Koskela. Our thanks are given to Jonty Rougier for his selfless contributions to APTS over many years.

7 Student representative feedback

Mengxi Gao, PGR rep from Warwick, summarised feedback from the student cohort. Most students really enjoyed the social events and activities, especially on the first evening. Most students prefer to have lectures on the same subject matter in the mornings and then likewise in the afternoons, allowing them to choose to attend topics they have the most interest in.

Paul Jenkins noted that the founding ethos of APTS was that it was good for students to broaden their horizons and that they might not know how a topic could be helpful to them in the future. He thanked Mengxi Gao for bringing this to everyone's attention and said that it would be a subject for further discussion.

8.1 Module leaders for next year

Paul Jenkins advised that both of the week 4 modules (Machine Learning and Causal Inference) may be coming up for renewal, and that those sets of module leaders may be ready to step down at the end of the coming year. Our chance to discuss and make a decision will be made at EC in January. Paul Jenkins asked if anyone had got any thoughts or suggestions. Discussion followed about Python being included, perhaps within Machine Learning; thoughts about module names and interpretation; directions for the syllabus; and incentives for module leaders. There was general agreement about keeping some coverage of machine learning within the APTS curriculum.

Paul Jenkins advised that confirmation of the module names and module leaders will be arranged by the EC, and that the feedback from this meeting would be taken into account.

Action: To forward discussion from the AC to the next EC meeting, particularly with reference to (i) incorporation of Python in the APTS curriculum, (ii) maintaining coverage of machine learning, possibly slightly broadening the coverage, (iii) the possibility of raising fees for module leaders and host organisations, which have been fixed (at £3k and £1k respectively) for many years. It was raised that hosts have a further financial incentive, since their own students can attended without extra accommodation charges.

8.2 Date of Next Meeting

Planned date 11th September 2025, 14:00–16:00.