

Branch Chairmen's Conference
Saturday 10th March 2007
Kensington Close Hotel
1100-1600

Present: Miggy Biller (York), Richard Browne (MEI), Tom Button (MEI), Stella Dudzic (MEI), Oscar Gregan (London), David Holland (MEI), Roger Porkess (MEI), Nick Robbins (Sussex and the S Coast), Paul Thornley (The Marches), Dean Wyles (Hampshire).

Apologies: Daniel Barber (Greater Manchester), Ray Beech (NW Midlands), John Du Feu (Jersey), Elfyn Hughes (North Wales), Nick Lord (Kent), Bernard Murphy (MEI), Andrew Rogers (SW Midlands), Judith Shard (Lancashire), Phil Stockton (Northants)

Minutes

1 Items arising

DH reported back on two issues: MEI will not be able to subsidise Branch Chairmen attending the MEI conference. MEI branches will remain distinct from Further Mathematics Centres and branches of the MA as there is a need for a forum to discuss MEI-specific items; however, there are advantages to collaborating with the FMN and the MA for items such as CPD. TB suggested that all Branch chairmen should invite their local FM Centre Managers to branch meetings as many of these will be teaching MEI. Many branches have already done this – details of FM Centre Managers can be found by looking on the Centre pages on www.fmnetwork.org.uk.

RP reported on the attempts to interest Wales in the FM Network.

The issue of past-paper markschemes was raised. MEI publishes these on the website as soon as OCR sends them. OCR is much quicker at providing markschemes and branches were thanked for their part in applying pressure to speed up the process. It was requested that the news on the MEI website should highlight when papers have been added. It was also requested to add a link to the examinations timetables.

2 Report from branches

Hampshire

There is confusion in colleges about which of the tiers should be offered when GCSE switches to 2-tier. Concern was reported about the teaching of S1: the descriptive statistics in the first half of the book is not appealing to students and this problem is compounded by some having studied GCSE Statistics whilst others haven't. It was asked whether Personal Tutor would be produced for any other modules – RP responded that there were no plans at present, but the technology was likely to feature in future publications. Module summaries were also asked about – almost all (except for S4 and M4) have been produced for the new specifications/books and are available through the MEI office.

The Marches

Now succeeded in reducing the amount of time at branch meetings discussing the papers. Many centres are now considering IGCSE given that GCSE is “change after

change after change”, but have raised concerns whether this will be recognised. The meetings have proved very useful to exchange ideas about different patterns of delivery and choice of modules as well as discussing C3 coursework. Some contact has been made with local FM Centres. There is an attempt to revive the Sixth Form lecture.

York

There are 3 meetings per year. This allows for 2 to review the papers and 1 to discuss more general items. The meetings are useful as a support network to compare modes of delivery and choice of modules. Stella attended the recent one where FAM was discussed; it was useful to have attendance from a member of the MEI team. The issue of 2-tier GCSE was raised – it is likely that Higher tier will be required to start A level with AS Use of Maths being suggested for grade C/Foundation tier students. Colleges will also find it difficult to decide on a level to enter resit students.

London

The London branch is running again after Michael Ling held a meeting in February 2006. The mailing list is out of date and it was also difficult to get an FM Network representative to the meeting. The options on the FP2 paper were discussed; RP responded that discussion about the options is ongoing with OCR. A drift to IGCSE has been reported from MEI GCSE centres.

Sussex

As with York 3 meetings per year have allowed for a meeting devoted to CPD aimed at MEI centres and sixth form colleges. A letter has been sent to local 11-16 schools stating that Higher tier will be required for AS Maths. AS Further Maths is being offered in two ways: FP1, FP2 & FP3 for students wanting to progress to highly mathematical courses and FP1, M1 & D1 for other students. The online resources are proving very useful for this. CPD has been offered on a break-even basis where schools/colleges will know the cost once final numbers have been confirmed. The idea of a discussion board for MEI was raised.

3 Chief Executive's business

Please encourage people in your area to become MEI examiners. It is necessary to have been a marker before becoming a reviser/setter. OCR is under no obligation to include MEI people therefore it is desirable for MEI people to put themselves forward.

There was considerable angst about last summer's C3. This January's C3 and C4 were taken out and some small changes were made; they have worked much better. One of the long questions in C1 also caused anxiety but the distribution of marks meant there was no problem in awarding the paper.

There is a naturally tendency over time for students to achieve higher marks at coursework. It is conceivable that OCR will raise the grade thresholds for coursework, though possibly only by a single mark. The branch chairs raised the issue of the C3 coursework section of the online resources; the balance of material available to teachers and students needs to be looked at.

FAM could become more significant with the move to 2-tier GCSE. It will be an ideal course for a student who achieved a grade C on the lower tier but wants to study AS level. There may also be a significant problem with students who have achieved a grade C on the Higher tier if the thresholds are too low. The current examination style of 40 questions in 2 hours may be changed to 30 questions in 2 hours.

Textbooks are being published for 2-tier GCSE at both Foundation and Higher tier. The AS Statistics book will cover all 3 modules: Z1 will be the same as S1 but with different questions, Z2 and Z3 will be entirely new. Revision guides for the 12 most popular modules are on the horizon. The handbook is evolving into “Companion to Advanced Mathematics & Statistics”.

MEI is active in encouraging the right direction in any changes, details of this can be found on the Position Papers page on the MEI website. There will be a report on the MEI website soon about the MEI/Nuffield conference on Double Award GCSE proposing a pilot.

4 Curriculum matters

KS3: There is a formal consultation on the new programmes of study on the QCA website. There will be more freedom and an emphasis on the big ideas (maths as a process). There is also a consultation on the DfES website about the KS2/KS3 pilot of testing per level. The new national curriculum will be in schools from September '07 for first teaching from September '08.

GCSE: Please see Appendix 1 for further information about 2-tier GCSE. There is concern about which level will be appropriate for students resitting GCSE: the boundaries may be too high on the Foundation paper whereas students taking the Higher paper may well not know which questions they should be able tackle. The suggestion was made that there be a session at the MEI conference discussing 2-tier GCSE, especially entry policies.

Since the meeting we have received the following quote from Ken Gowers (the OCR Mathematics Subject Officer responsible for J518): "...it is possible for candidates to take different tier modular and terminal papers and that the terminal paper determines the final entry tier. "

A level: The next change will be A* grades being awarded from 2010. This will be based on A2 study and there will be no changes to examinations.

5 CPD

2-day courses:

All going well; feedback good. We'll soon be evaluating the impact of 2-day (as opposed to 1-day) courses through a questionnaire to participants. Forthcoming dates below. See: <http://www.mei.org.uk/cpd/alevel.shtml>

Course leader: Sue de Pomerai
Fri 23 March 2007 and Sat 2 June 2007. Warwick
Mon 16 July 2007 and Sat 13 Oct 2007. Manchester

Introduction to Mechanics

Course leader: Maureen Sheehan
Thurs 22 Mar 2007 and Sat 9 June 2007 London
Weds 13 June 2007 and Sat 13 Oct 2007 Leeds

Introduction to Statistics

Course leader: Stella Dudzic
Sat 9 June 2007 and Tues 18 Sept 2007. Warwick

AS Further Pure Mathematics

Course leader: Richard Lissaman
Fri 13 July 2007 and Fri 5 October 2007. London

OCR Additional Mathematics

Course leader: Tom Button
Mon 2 July 2007 and Wed 24 October 2007. Warwick

TAM:

Now taking applications for course commencement in June at the four universities. Course fees £500 which includes 3 years access to web resources and email support, two school visits, textbooks and eight study days. Postgraduate certificate (one third of a Masters) on completion.

There'll be an optional day at the MEI conference to support participants getting to grips with the big ideas in AS Core. This went well last year:

"Just wanted to say thanks for all your hard work on the TAM day today, it was really good to spend a day just talking Maths and discussing the ideas with others, certainly very valuable and just the sort of thing that I was after when I applied to the course. I really enjoyed and appreciated the day."

"Thank you again for your amazing efforts at the MEI conference. The TAM day was fantastic - well worth it."

"The Reading day was fantastic - unthreatening and inspiring."

"The MEI conference was FANTASTIC."

See: <http://www.mei.org.uk/tam.shtml>

TFM:

All going well with very positive comments from participants. Now starting to advertise 07-08 course. Course fees £400 which includes 2 years access to web resources and email support, textbooks and four study days. MEI certificate on completion. See: <http://www.mei.org.uk/cpd/tfm.shtml>

6 Industry

RB reported on the current progress.

- i) Industry committee – 1st meeting took place on 29/1/07.
- ii) Current developments:
 Functional Mathematics – Very little has been decided. This will be assessed by test, task or portfolio (though probably not portfolio), based on agreed standards.
 Mathematics in diplomas – The proportion of maths in these is unknown, even in Engineering.
 There is likely to be an opportunity for MEI to contribute to good practice by providing online resources for these, as opposed to designing specifications.
- iii) Joint conference with IET – 29/5/07 focusing mainly on Further Maths and engineering.
- iv) Work to support vocational qualifications through C&G – We are hoping to produce some online material.
- v) We are considering producing a diagnostic tool to help people in industry assess their employees' needs.
- vi) Support for business in training existing employees – This could involve helping companies support their employees including material for basic skills at levels 1 & 2. They may be interested in extending this to GCSE and possibly A level, which we could help them with.
- vii) Extending links with industry for Further Mathematics Network Centres – Links have been made with SETNET and N Leics FMC has staged a successful year 11 “Maths at work” day.
- viii) Involvement with careers organisations – There is work to be done here. Contact has been made with Connexions, who have requested a presentation from the FMN, and the National Association of Careers Advisors.

7 The Further Mathematics Network

The Further Mathematics Network is progressing very strongly with over 1000 students being tutored and over 1000 schools registered. A level Further Mathematics numbers were up by 23% last year and AS level numbers are up by over 50% over the last 2 years.

Branch chairs are asked to encourage registration with local FM Centres in their branch meetings and outline the advantages of doing so (free access to resources and invitations to revision/study/enrichment days).

AS Further Mathematics in year 13 can be a very useful qualification for students; however, many schools are unaware of this opportunity for students. Branch chairs are encouraged to promote AS FM in year 13, either ‘in-house’ or through their local FMN Centre. Likewise branch chairs are also encouraged to promote Additional Mathematics for able year 11 students and schools could approach their local Further Mathematics Centre to work together on this.

The network would like to know of any evidence of university courses that seem to discriminate against FM inappropriately and, conversely, any university courses that are encouraging students to take FM.

There will be a UKMT/FMN Team Challenge for sixth-formers in the Autumn term.

Details will be published through the Network/MEI.

8 Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Saturday 8th March 2008 in London (venue to be confirmed).

Appendix 1: Two Tier GCSE changes

Based on information from Michael Ling, Ken Barley and the OCR website

Introduction

Three tier GCSE is being replaced by two Tier GCSE. The new MEI specification (J518) has been approved and can be found on the OCR web-site (www.ocr.org.uk, click on qualifications, then GCSE then MEI Mathematics).

This specification is for first teaching in September, 2006 and first certification in summer 2008; this new specification will remain in place for one year only. It is to be replaced by a similar specification (J519) which does not include coursework. The specification has been approved and the specimen material is being finalised.

Changes from three tier GCSE (1968) to J518 (two tier with coursework)

The changes are minimal, in that the same regulations remain in force. These are:

- The modular paper counts for 30% of the total assessment
- The terminal paper counts for 50% of the total assessment.
- Coursework remains unchanged, contributing 20% of the assessment.
- 50% of the written assessment is to be assessed with no calculators; the first half of each paper is non-calculator.
- Candidates may sit the modular paper up to a year in advance and may resit the paper once with the better mark counting.
- The proportion of multi-step questions and the proportion of manipulative algebra remain the same.
- At each level there will be one question where candidates are expected to provide the units of the answer and one mark where candidates are expected to give an answer to a sensible degree of accuracy. In the MEI scheme it has been decided that these questions will be set in the Terminal paper.

The content of the specification remains unchanged. However, because assessment is now only in two tiers, extra grades are available in each tier. Consequently, there is extra material in each tier - for Foundation to enable Grade C to be awarded and in Higher Tier to enable grade D to be awarded.

Resource Material for J518

Specimen papers are available on the OCR website.

In addition, MEI is preparing two sets of practice papers. The modular papers will be ready by the end of this term. Terminal papers will be ready by September.

Practice papers may be purchased from the MEI Office. Purchasers of the papers will receive the modular papers as soon as they are ready and the terminal papers will be sent for no extra charge next September.

Teachers should be warned that the specification as published contains some shading. This material is not the material that is new to the Tier as a result of the change to two tiers. It represents the material that is in the GCSE specification that is in the other tier of the Programmes of Study.

A Word document of the specification is available on request.

J519

The new two tier GCSE is to be replaced in a year by a second version two tier scheme with no coursework.

The major changes to be introduced are:

- AO1 material is to increase from 10% to 20%. Additionally some of the assessment will include rather more investigatory material than at present.
- The proportion of material in AO4 (Handling Data) will increase.
- The contribution of the modular and terminal papers will become 40:60.

There will be no change to the content or the mode of assessment. Papers will continue to be the length as at present.

The specimen papers for J519 are adaptations of the specimen papers already approved for J518.

Once the set of practice papers are completed for J518 they will be adapted for J519.

J519 specification (for teaching from Sept 2007)

The specification is on the OCR website, on the same page as J518 but labelled (September) 2007.

Examinations in the three specifications:
Three tier (1968)

There will be re-sit opportunities at Intermediate and Higher level for the 3 tier 1968 specification in January 2008. There will not be a resit at Foundation level. The papers have been set.

Two tier with coursework (J518)

Papers are being prepared for assessment as follows:

	June 2007	Jan 2008	June 2008	Jan 2009	June 2009
Foundation Modular Paper 1 (B261)	Y	Y	Y	Y	-
Foundation Terminal Paper 2 (B262)	-	-	Y	Y	-
Higher Tier Modular Paper 3 (B263)	Y	Y	Y	Y	-
Higher Tier Terminal Paper 4 (B264)	-	-	Y	Y	-

Two tier without coursework (J519)

This qualification will first be certificated in June 2009.

- The Modular papers (B291 and B293) will be available from June 2008 and at every subsequent session (January and June).
- The Terminal papers (B292 and B294) will be available from June 2009 and at every subsequent session (January and June).