Work on the undergraduate supervision system: Michaelmas Term 2024 progress report

This third progress report follows those made for Michaelmas Term 2023, Lent Term 2024, and a report on the new supervision payment methodology in lieu of an Easter Term 2024 progress report. It summarises the progress made to address matters raised by the "Justice for College Supervisors" (J4CS) campaign, regarding the undergraduate supervision system.

College representatives and J4CS campaigners have continued to hold constructive and informative meetings this term, meeting on 17 October; 7 November; 21 November; and 5 December. The primary discussion at those meetings has been the employment of supervisors, a topic that both sides have acknowledged is challenging and complex and will take some time to be fully explored and articulated. Therefore only one joint statement will be released for meetings this term, unlike in the previous academic year, to summarise these ongoing discussions.

In the meantime, the following progress on the campaign's aims is being made:

1. A report detailing results from the second half of a **supervisor workload survey** held in Lent Term 2024 is currently being created. Questions in the latter half of the survey were primarily qualitative: supervisors were asked what guidance they received; who commissioned them to supervise; their motivations to supervise, and their views on CamCORS. It is hoped that a second report on responses to those questions, and further analysis of all data from the survey, will be published in Lent Term 2025.
2. As part of an action produced by the ongoing Teaching Review, the Senior Tutors' Committee (1 November 2024) and General Board's Education Committee (18 November 2024) approved Department and Faculty **guidance on how to best support undergraduate supervisors**. This includes what information to provide when approaching potential supervisors; what student and course information should be provided to supervisors and Directors of Studies; and general principles of how much work is typically expected to deliver a supervision.
3. A further action by the Teaching Review was to **revitalise Directors of Studies Committees**, the bodies which oversee supervision teaching within a Tripos. New terms of reference for the Senior Tutors' Education Committee were approved by the Senior Tutors' Committee (29 November 2024), providing **more effective intercollegiate oversight** of Directors of Studies Committees. This will ensure that supervision arrangements are sufficient within each undergraduate degree, and that any issues can be brought to the attention of the Colleges to resolve.
4. The latest version of CamCORS now provides statistical data to each College on the number of supervisions delivered by a supervisor to the College and all other Colleges. This will enable Colleges to more easily identify supervisors who consistently provide them a high volume of supervisions, and therefore **enables eligible supervisors to be offered employment contracts**.
5. All but one College (due to an ongoing website redevelopment) has created a webpage providing **public College-specific guidance for supervisors**, including what reporting deadlines should be met for prompt payments to supervisors, and when a supervisor can expect to receive payment from the College if they meet those deadlines.

Future updates will continue to be sent via the mailing list ucam-college-ug-supervisor-info@lists.cam.ac.uk (please click on the link to register), open to those who have an @cam.ac.uk e-mail address.

Richard Anthony, Judith Bunbury, and Malcolm Millbrook
College representatives meeting with the J4CS campaigners
16/12/2024