WEEK 1: Beginning Monday 5th October

New undergraduate students will be having a full week of Freshers’ activities and we have been instructed by the College not to impose on them any activity which is assessed for degree purposes during the period 5th October – 9th October. We are, however, allowed to arrange various induction activities and so a number of introductory meetings, inductions (computing and library), talks (health and safety) and introductory lectures and problem solving classes have been scheduled (apart from 11.00 onwards on Tuesday 6th October as this is being reserved for Freshers’ Fair).

First Year students will be given a Diagnostic Test during the first week of term (questions based on basic A-level material) and selected students are required to sit an English Language Test.

Afternoon refreshments for all First Year students and their Personal Tutors will be served on Monday 5th October from 16.00-17.00 in 341/342. Please join us to informally welcome the students!

The MathSoc Start of Year Party will take place in the Fifth Floor Common Room from 19.00 – 21.00 on Thursday 8th October. Apologies in advance for the extra noise but if you are working late, please stop by as the students appreciate staff attendance at their Departmental social events!

PERSONAL TUTEES

Most academic staff will be allocated new First Year personal tutees, whom you should meet at 14:30 on Monday 5th October. This first meeting with them is simply to arrange a suitable time for their weekly tutorials with you. Further information is available in the other Personal Tutor documents.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO MEET YOUR NEW PERSONAL TUTEES AT 14.30 ON MONDAY 5TH OCTOBER, PLEASE LET MRS DONNA PILE-GRAPE KNOW (UNDERGRADUATE MATHS STUDENT OFFICE: maths-student-office@imperial.ac.uk) AND ALSO TELL HER WHEN YOU WILL BE MEETING YOUR STUDENTS FOR THE FIRST TIME (PLEASE BE SURE TO CONSULT THE FIRST YEAR SCHEDULE TO KNOW THEIR AVAILABILITY). SHE WILL PLACE A NOTICE ON YOUR OFFICE DOOR LETTING YOUR TUTEES KNOW YOU ARE UNAVAILABLE AND PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS.

LECTURES

M1 introductory lectures and M2, M3 and M4/M5 lectures start on Thursday 8th October.

For those new to the Department, please note that lectures and classes start on the hour and finish 50 minutes later. Any double lectures normally have an appropriate break in the middle of the two hours; any changes to this (for example, ending twenty minutes early with no break) are to be discussed with the class. At the end of term, students normally complete a Student Online Evaluation (SOLE) for each of your courses in which they assess various aspects of your teaching! Students are also encouraged to feedback through the Year Reps during term in order to address issues at the time rather than retrospectively.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

Panopto, the lecture recording system, is available in the Clore Lecture Theatre, Room 340, 139, 130 and 140.

All Course Lecturers using these rooms are encouraged to take advantage of the automatic recordings. The system will capture audio and image from the visualiser/computer screen. Please contact John Conway, Senior Learning Technologist for the Physical Sciences, with your timetable to have the automatic recordings set up. These recordings can be set to take place and not released to students until the Course Lecturer is
happy for them to be released. John Conway will be holding drop-in training sessions in the Department for Panopto and Blackboard Learn. Please contact him with any questions.

The College VLE is through Blackboard Learn. To set up a Blackboard module for your course and to enrol students, please speak to Agnieszka Damasiewicz (Year 1 & 2 modules) and Donna Pile-Grant (Year 3 & 4 modules). For support on how to use Blackboard, please contact John Conway.

With the recent changes to the College website, the Department has been asked to move information from the website to Blackboard so that the website becomes an external facing website only. All internal documents and information will be moved to Blackboard for students, and will be available under the “Math Central” pages. Staff will also have access to this module. Information for staff will still be available on the College website under: About Us, Information for Staff. However, please note that this may need to be moved onto Blackboard as well in the coming year for security purposes.

**PROBLEM SOLVING CLASSES**

All compulsory First and Second Year courses will have associated weekly problem solving classes (starting either Week 2 or 3 depending on the course). These problem classes will have Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) assigned to them to assist the Course Lecturer.

Course Lecturers should ensure that GTAs are provided with copies of problem sheets and model answers in good time for each problem solving class.

All First and Second Year courses with problems classes will also run the ‘Meet Your Marker’ scheme during problems classes after the return of each test/coursework. GTA markers should be identified to students so that students can ask them questions for further feedback on their work.

GTAs are expected to have a good understanding of the course and not just turn up, stand around waiting to be called and then attempt to read the solutions from printed sheets. GTAs will be asked to wear clear name badges. Course Lecturers should meet with their GTAs regularly to discuss any issues arising from the course/problem sheets/tests. GTAs are being encouraged to run small ‘tutorials’ or examples sessions during problems classes to review common questions/test solutions/provide enhancement; the GTAs should review these with the Course Lecturer prior to the problems class. Course Lecturers will be asked to provide brief assessments of their GTAs at the end of the term.

All Third and Fourth Year courses and Second Year options courses are **expected to have designated problem sessions WITHIN the timetabled lecture slots**. Course Lecturers should arrange their own classes/tutorials within the hours timetabled for the courses, normally one hour every two weeks or half an hour every week for courses with three lectures per week and pro-rata for others. You may also consider an alternative option, for example, two classes in week 7 and three in week 11 if this makes more sense for your course. If possible, some of these classes could include group work followed by in-class presentations after direct feedback from the Course Lecturer. Course Lecturers with double lecture slots are encouraged to include their problems sessions in the double lectures. Please let your students know how problems classes will be arranged at the start of the course. All courses should provide a sufficient number of problems sheets/old exams for students to prepare from and to gain feedback on during the set problems classes.

Coursework/Tests – all Course Lecturers must inform the Undergraduate Maths Student Office at the start of term of any assessed coursework/test due dates for the term, and inform their class of the dates in one of the first lectures. All Third and Fourth Year module lecturers will be asked to return a “Feedback Form” including this information, please see more information below. Due to the number of Third and Fourth Year modules, there is often overlap with due dates. We ask you to be willing to move dates slightly as and when needed to alleviate the pressures on both the students and the Undergraduate Maths Student Office. The Office will collect the work as per the guidelines in the Student Handbook (please be sure to adhere to these times when telling students of due dates and times):

- M1 courses - 12 noon
- M2 courses - 14.00
- M3, M4, M5 courses - 16.00
- Projects - 16.00
FEEDBACK

We are asking all Third and Fourth Year Course Lecturers if you are not assigning assessed coursework to consider providing unassessed coursework that students can submit to you for feedback without a mark being assigned to it.

Our lowest overall positive response rate on NSS in the past few years has been on Feedback. Although we have increased feedback in the First and Second Years, in the Third and Fourth Years there is still little opportunity for official feedback. In 2014-2015 we asked all lecturers to consider how they were giving feedback to their students, and we are asking for this again this year.

Third and Fourth Year Course Lecturers – please could you determine ‘how’ you will give feedback during the term, whether this is through coursework/tests/problem sheets reviewed in class, etc. The recommendation is that there is some either assessed or non-assessed coursework submitted to be marked and returned for each course. Please comment on this to students at the start of the course in order to provide clarity. We ask all Third and Fourth Year Course Lecturers to give us a statement on how they will provide feedback at the start of term. Please see the enclosed “Feedback Form” and return to the UG office by the date supplied.

Please do, also, remember that the students will be taking seven other modules in addition to yours. Coursework to be handed in should not be too lengthy/too numerous so that students can concentrate on all modules equally. The recommendation is 2-3 pieces of work per term (or if more numerous, they should be much shorter in length); you may wish to discuss this with the students.

SUPPORT CLASSES

All First Year students will take part in support classes run by Fourth Year students. These classes will be run in small groups and based around the problem sheets set by the Course Lecturers. The hope is that these support classes will both help weaker students from the start and also encourage collaborative problem solving.

The groups will be set by the end of the second week and the sessions will start in the third week.

Course Lecturers should email all First year problem sheets, test questions and solutions to the Undergraduate Office (maths-student-office@imperial.ac.uk). These will be made available to Personal Tutors and the peer tutors. It is important that this material be sent to the UG Office on a timely basis.

For any questions on the Fourth Year tutorials, please contact the UG Liaison Officer Anne-Marie Hilder.

MEETING FOR NEW STAFF

All new academic staff are invited to a meeting with members of the Teaching Team on Tuesday 6th October at 14.00 in room 642 to discuss the teaching and academic programme in the Department. You should have already received an email to welcome you. If you have not received a welcome email please contact the UG Office. Current staff members are also welcome to attend.

Dr Christopher Ford
Senior Tutor

Professor David Evans
Director of Undergraduate Studies