

**UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS  
ACADEMIC COMMITTEE (DMAC)**

**DMAC 45**

There will be a meeting of the Department of Materials Academic Committee at **2.00 pm** on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008 in the **Wolfson Meeting Room**.

\* Starred items will not be discussed unless requested in writing (email) to the Chair by 10.00 am Monday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

**AGENDA**

1. **Apologies & Welcome**
2. **Report from the Chair of JCCG (DA)**
3. **Report from the Chair of JCCU (HB)**
4. **Minutes of DMAC 44**
5. **Shortened Minutes**
6. **Matters Arising – that are not specific Agenda Items**

**DMAC 45/1**

**\*From DMAC 27**

**\*Minute 4 Report from JCCU Chair:**

**Practical Classes** Possibility of submitting reports in word-processed format. JMS has provided a lead on information on software for the detection of plagiarism. AOT is investigating its use and attended a half-day workshop on plagiarism in June 2006. AOT noted that EPSC has now produced some guidance on plagiarism.

AOT reported that the University is now trialling plagiarism detection software called "Turnitin" in two departments (Law and Computing).

**In progress: AOT**

**\*From DMAC 32**

**\*Minute 11iv Report from the Faculty: Guidance to Supervisors** AOT and CRMG will adapt the guidance from the EPSC. Andrew Watt, as part of his CDF duties, will assist in taking this forward, has been briefed by AOT and will produce a final version for DMAC in wk7 TT08.

**Action: AARW**

**\*From DMAC 37**

**\*Minute 4ii 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Polymers** HEA has agreed to take the lead on the overall review of polymers teaching.

**Action: HEA**

**\*From DMAC 41**

**\*Minute 10i Report from the Tutors' Committee (LJFJ): Writing Skills (DMAC 41/5)** DMAC noted that five Materials colleges/tutors have some provision for writing skills training, and would like to see all Materials colleges/tutors to provide some form of training such that the students' ability

to articulate a well structured, coherent scientific argument is enhanced. AOT will look into what provision, if any, the Language Centre has for more basic English language skills, as DMAC identified a lack of such skills in some cases.

**Action: AOT**

**\*From DMAC 43**

**\*Minute 3ii Report from the Chair of JCCG (DA): Access to the Common Room** JCCG had expressed its disappointment that access to the common room was now generally denied outside of 8.00 am – 2.00 pm unless individual's swipe cards had been activated for a specific purpose. AOT has spoken with the Department Administrator about the matter. The most recent plan is that students will have access to the common room during the normal working day (8.00 am – 6.00 pm), although this could perhaps be extended to 7.00 pm. DA responded that he thought this would be acceptable to JCCG for weekdays, but that JCCG would like to have access at the weekends in addition. CRMG suggested that DMAC should press for as open access as possible to the common room given that the card swipe system is capable of logging access and that there are CCTV cameras in the corridor. DMAC supported this suggestion, and AOT will take the matter forward but requested that HoDs of Materials and Eng. Sci. first determine together a policy on this issue.

**Action: CRMG**

**\*Minute 4i Report from the Chair of JCCU (AZ): Industrial Visits (DMAC 43/2)** Following a discussion on Industrial Visits DMAC concluded that in future all students should submit one, and be encouraged to submit two reports on Self-organised visits. The Exam Regulations and Course Handbooks will be updated accordingly.

**In progress: ICS/LJFJ/AOT**

AOT and ICS noted that if cohort sizes were to increase as the Department desired, then it would be necessary for additional Department Organised visits to be put in place. CRMG agreed to explore with PJD whether an annual 'Begbroke' visit could be put in place that included spin-out companies and BegbrokeNano as a commercial enterprise.

**Action: CRMG**

**\*Minute 4ii Report from the Chair of JCCU (AZ): Options Courses & Introductory Lectures** Following a discussion on introductory lectures to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year DMAC requested that JCCU advise students to read the course handbook and synopses and then to discuss Options with their College Tutors.

**Action: AZ/HB**

AOT agreed to give a 15 minute lecture on the structure of the new Options scheme to the current 3<sup>rd</sup> year students if they decide they need it after having read the course literature. JCCU should inform him if such a lecture is desired.

**Action: AZ/HB**

**\*Minute 8iv Examiners' Reports (DMAC 43/4): Draft Response to Examiners' Reports (DMAC 43/5)** The issue of setting penalties for late submission of Part II theses was raised incidentally. AOT, after discussion with RIT (2006/07 Chairman of Examiners) and AC (current Chairman of Examiners), will prepare a proposal for possible implementation in 2008/09.

**In progress: AOT/ICS**

**\*From DMAC 44**

**\*Minute 8 MPLSD Draft Comments on EPSC Draft of Section 2 of the University's Briefing Document for the Institutional Auditors in 2009 (DMAC 44/5)** It was noted that MPLS Division requires comments by 9<sup>th</sup> week of MT07. A working party comprising AOT, CRMG and JMS will consider the paper in detail and draft a response.

**Action: AOT/CRMG/JMS**

**\*Minute 9 GP3 Macroplasticity & Mechanical Working Processes Course Content** RIT had reported by email that he and Paul Butler (the lecturer) had met. DMAC endorsed proposals that the lecturer should make clear to the students that Part I examination questions would reflect the content of the wholly new course and that material already covered in other lecture courses should be cut from the Macroplasticity course. It was noted that the content of the tutorial question sheet had not apparently been addressed. AOT and ICS will follow up on this specific issue.

**In progress: AOT/ICS**

**\*Minute 11iii Report from the Divisional Undergraduate Studies Advisory Panel (AOT) – (a) Research-Teaching Nexus** The University is putting together evidence for the importance having active researchers / scholars as teachers, to combat apparent government views that the link is not important. The MPLS Division requests departmental comments by 1<sup>st</sup> wk of HT08. A working party comprising AOT, AJW and JMS will consider the matter further and prepare a response on behalf of Materials.

**Action: AOT/AJW/JMS**

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| <b>7. Draft QAA Benchmark Statement 2007 for Materials</b>   | <b>DMAC 45/2</b> |
| <b>8. Student Surveys</b>  |                  |
| <b>(i) National Student Survey</b>   | <b>DMAC 45/3</b> |
| <b>(ii) Oxford Student Course Experience Questionnaire</b>   | <b>DMAC 45/4</b> |
| <b>9. The Use of Bilingual Dictionaries in Prelims</b>   | <b>DMAC 45/5</b> |
| <b>10. MMES Performance Statistics for Materials and Earth Sciences</b>  | <b>DMAC 45/6</b> |
| <b>11. Training in Computer Programming</b>  |                  |
| DMAC is asked to consider in principle if it desirable and practicable to introduce specific training in computer programming as part of our UG degree programmes. |                  |

- 12. Development of a Contingency Plan for the University's Examination System in a Year Disrupted by a Pandemic** **DMAC 45/7**
- 13. Report from the Tutors' Committee (JTC/LJFJ)**
- 14. Report from EMS Standing Committee (SGR/LJFJ)**
- 15. Reports from Divisional Committees**
- (i) Academic Committee (JMS)**
  - (ii) Undergraduate Access Advisory Panel (AOT)**
- 16. Chairman's Report**
- 17. Any Other Business**
- 18. Date of the next meeting – 2.00 pm Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Wolfson Meeting Room**

**The meeting is scheduled to end at 5.00 pm.**