

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

DMAC 46

There will be a meeting of the Department of Materials Academic Committee at **2.00 pm** on Monday 25th February 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 25th February 2008.

AGENDA

1. Apologies & Welcome

2. Minutes of DMAC 45

DMAC 46/1

3. Shortened Minutes

**4. Matters Arising – that are not specific Agenda Items
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 2nd 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)*** AOT reported that the Language Centre has neither provision nor funding for native English speakers. The Language Centre had informed him that colleges have funding for support of native English speakers.

AOT has suggested to Tutors that they might use the new Divisional lecture series on Energy & Climate Change as a vehicle for an essay writing exercise. In light of the Language Centre's response DMAC supported a

proposal for AOT to ask Tutors via the Tutors' Committee to report on how students with weak English are supported (particularly with a view to the Department's QAA justification).

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

[*Secretary's Note: Through DC, AOT has requested that a memo be issued to clarify access rules.*]

***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/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

It was noted that the Student Materials Society were organising a visit to the EM laboratories at Begbroke.

***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 9th 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 1st 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

***From DMAC 45**

***Minute 2 Report from the Chair of JCCG (DA) – Access to the Department Workshop** JCCG thanked DMAC for having supported JCCG's request for the introduction of a 'super-user' status for extended access to the Department's workshop. The Department Administrator and Chief Workshop Technician had rejected the proposal on health & safety grounds, but the Chief Workshop Technician will consider all requests for supervised extended use if a student can show that he/she has used all available standard hours. Although this outcome was not all that JCCG had hoped for they saw it as a positive resolution. JCCG will draft an informal proforma for applying for such extended time.

Action: JCCG

***Minute 2 Report from the Chair of JCCG (DA) – Availability of SEMs to Part II Students in HT** JCCG raised concern over the availability of SEMs for Part II students during the first three weeks of Hilary Term. Both SEMs that were normally available to Part II students had been block-booked for the new 3rd year Characterisation module during weeks 1&2, and one of them had been additionally block-booked for a regular training course during week 3. The two basic instruments were the only SEMs available for Part II use because it was not possible for Part II students to become sufficiently experienced to become approved users of more sophisticated microscopes. It was reported that a large proportion of the block-booking in weeks 1&2 had in fact been used. It was agreed that Part II students would be pre-warned of this lack of availability in future years, but that if sessions were not used

during the Characterisation module then they should be made available with priority to Part II and 1st year graduate students. This might also be applied to daytime bookings in wk0 (including use for modular courses). AOT will liaise with CJDH & MRC.

Action: AOT

***Minute 9 The Use of Bilingual Dictionaries in Prelims (DMAC 45/5)**

DMAC did not feel strongly about the issue of bilingual dictionaries and considered this to be a matter for the Proctors. AOT will inform the Chair of Prelims.

Action: AOT

5. **Recruitment & Widening Participation**
 - (i) **Schools Liaison Officer Annual Report (MJC)** **DMAC 46/2**
 - (ii) **Widening Participation**
6. **Admissions Report** **DMAC 46/3**
7. **Degree Class Statistics** **DMAC 46/4**
8. **Employment Statistics** **DMAC 46/5**
9. **Student Materials Society “Book Lists”** **DMAC 46/6**
10. **OULS Electronic Resources for Materials Science** **DMAC 46/7**
11. ***Code of Practice for Supervisors of PGR Students** **DMAC 46/8**
12. **Report from E(M)EM Standing Committee (ICS)**
13. **Reports from Divisional Committees**
 - (i) **Academic Committee (JMS)**
 - (ii) **Graduate Studies Advisory Panel (AOT)**
 - (iii) **Undergraduate Studies Advisory Panel (AOT)**
 - (iv) **Academic Audit Committee (AOT)**
14. **Chairman’s Report**
15. **Any Other Business**
16. **Date of the next meeting – 2.00 pm Monday 5th May 2008, Wolfson Meeting Room**

The meeting is scheduled to end at 5.00 pm.