

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

**DMAC 47**

There will be a meeting of the Department of Materials Academic Committee at **2.00 pm** on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008 in the **Wolfson Meeting Room**.

\* Starred items will not be discussed unless requested in writing (email) to the Chair by 10.00 am Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

**AGENDA**

1. **Apologies & Welcome**
2. **Report from the Chair of JCCG (KD)**
3. **Report from the Chair of JCCU (HB)**
4. **Minutes of DMAC 46**
5. **Shortened Minutes**
6. **Matters Arising – that are not specific Agenda Items**

**DMAC 47/1**

**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).

*DMAC 45:* AOT reported that MPLS had agreed to take forward his request that they ask for a progress report on this trial.

**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)** 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).

**In progress: AOT**

*[Secretary's Note following DMAC 46: Tutors have agreed to provide this information and in due course AOT will report to DMAC a summary of the provision.]*

**\*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 on CRMG now superseded**

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

*[Secretary's Note following DMAC 46: The JCCG Chair has now spoken to Alana Davies; a memo is expected in the near future (APD actioned by DC).]*

**\*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.

**Action: AOT/ICS**

**\*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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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**

**\*From DMAC 46**

**\*Minute 5 Recruitment and Widening Participation** Given the imminent end to the Gatsby project, the future of the school liaison activity needs to be considered. AOT will take this to CRMG/APD and thence to DC.

**In progress: AOT**

**\*Minute 8 Employment Statistics (DMAC 46/5)** A survey of graduates taken 6-months after graduation was considered. It was noted that the report did not include any statistics for MEM students. There was concern that the statistics showed a rate of 29% unemployment; in previous years 0% has been recorded in this category. The issue was raised as to whether or not the questionnaire had been revised leading to different types of responses being elicited from the leavers.

AOT will contact tutors to see how accurate these statistics may be, particularly regarding unemployment, as tutors are generally aware where their students end up.

**Action: AOT**

**\*Minute 9 Student Materials Society “Book Lists” (DMAC 46/6)** It was reported that the Materials Society have created a very good website, with useful resources, which could be a good advertisement for the Department. Full website access was restricted to members only, including AOT as the “Senior Member” of MatSoc. “Book lists” have been devised which detail specific targeted reading for individual questions from tutorial problem sheets. AOT had considered that this could potentially damage the students’ ability to develop research skills and has discussed his concerns with the Chair of MatSoc.

DMAC were not particularly concerned and felt there may even be a positive aspect in encouraging students to refer to texts, rather than relying on lecture notes. However, there was concern that Faculty did not have full access to the website. AOT/JMS will present this to Faculty.

**Action: AOT/JMS**

**\*Minute 10 OULS Electronic Resources Checklist for Materials Science (DMAC 46/7)** The librarian responsible for MPLS students had developed and circulated this aid to literature searching. DMAC considered that the format of the document implied that this was a checklist for personal use. AOT proposed to report to the librarian that, while the list of resources was valuable, the search checklist was unnecessary and that students should keep their own record. DMAC felt that the checklist did not reflect how real literature searches were conducted and endorsed AOT’s proposal.

**Action: AOT**

This prompted the issue that supervisors needed to be able to guide new researchers to review skills training. AOT will send the relevant pages from the handbook out to supervisors and the Part II Organiser so a steer can be given as to suitable skills classes.

**Action: AOT**

**\*Minute 11 Code of Practice for Supervisors of PGR Students (DMAC 46/8)** It was reported that this has been approved by the Divisional Board. AOT highlighted that there is now guidance on normal maximum supervisory load, equivalent to six full-time students. Following extensive debate about whether Part II supervision should be included, it was confirmed that this was for PGR students only but there is a valid issue about whether Chemistry and Materials Part IIs should be included. A distinction between Part II and PGR was noted: there is a duty to provide

projects for Part II whereas supervision of PGR is largely a matter of choice. To address the issue of load for Part IIs, and associated funding concerns, it was agreed that a poll would be taken ex-committee to see if a mechanism for funding and fair allocation of Part II supervisors could be devised.

**In progress: AOT**

*[Secretary's Note following DMAC 46: DC has agreed a procedure for Part II funding. A note on this will be circulated in due course.]*

7. **Report from Tutors' Committee (AOT/PJM)**
8. **Regulation Change: Penalties for late submission of coursework and new deadline for submission of Part II theses** **DMAC 47/2**
9. **Teaching Lab Access for Research Workers** **DMAC 47/3**
10. **Review of New 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Options Arrangements and Programme**
11. **Student Transcripts – Subject Specific Texts** **DMAC 47/4**
12. **Report from EMS Standing Committee**
13. **Reports from Divisional Committees**
  - (i) **Academic Committee (JMS)**
  - (ii) **Undergraduate Studies Access Panel (AOT)**
14. **Chairman's Report**
15. **Any Other Business**
16. **Date of the next meeting – 2.00 pm Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2008, Wolfson Meeting Room**

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