

OXFORD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS

DMAC 11b Revised Minutes of Academic Committee held on 10 May 2002 at 12.30pm
in Room 20.19, ETB Building

Present GDWS (Chair), AC, PRW, RIT, APS, JMS, CFH,

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The Draft minutes of DMAC 11a were agreed, after the insertion of the words '*for supplementary subjects*' after the words '*remission arrangements*' on line 22 of page 4.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

Item 12 Team Design Projects

GDWS reported that two additional projects had been put forward.

CRMG – Microstructure and phase diagrams and

APS – Design, build and test an undergraduate practical on quantised conduction.

Item 6 JCCU Matters

(i) Engineering and Society

The current regulations had now been circulated to 2nd Year MSOM students.

(ii) Future of Entrepreneurship course for 2003

Option 1 is being pursued and GDWS reported that negotiations were proceeding in the hope of continuation of the course in 2003. He had told the Business School that we were in favour of some pruning. A.Hopwood and S.New had said they felt this was going in the right direction.

Action GDWS

3. Supplementary Subject legislation

A paper was tabled by APS

GDWS suggested an amendment to paragraph 2, line 2 as follows. "That is, a candidate who takes a supplementary subject will be given remission '*from one element*' of Engineering and Society", instead of '*all aspects*'. This amendment was agreed to by the committee.

Action APS

4. Entrepreneurship Course

See Minute 2 (above).

5. Future running of DMAC

GDWS suggested a draft strategy paper for discussion, and to decouple the course re-structure.

He went on to say that SGR had accepted an invitation to sit on the first stage of the syllabus reform at MIT, U.S.A., where they were undergoing radical restructuring of courses. He asked that the committee defer its own discussion until SGR returned, when SGR and APS would present something to DMAC.

The SGR – APS link into MIT was approved.

APS said we must start with assessment and work backwards. There was a need for root and branch reform. At present there was definite work overload for students. The need was to start with assessment – the students are assessment led. GDWS then said there was the potential for some money from international sources. With regard to EPSC APS said that he had made contact here, and was convinced that radical proposals, if well thought out, will succeed.

GDWS then said that the message which is coming through from Division and EPSC is that we need to be aware of the input of external examiners, who report to the Vice Chancellor.

GDWS further said that the team based design project is a good mode of assessment. There is need for intellectual training, not just basic facts.

Agenda Items 7, Advanced Options, and 11, Option courses 2002/2003

were taken together.

GDWS reported that these matters had come up for discussion at the recent JCCU. There had been an informative discussion with students and two of them undertook to canvass the other students and get back to him. This they did within the day!

APS commented that some of our best students feel they are not given truly challenging advanced options. The question of groupings was also discussed at this time.

PRW said we must make good use of our time. Attendances at some options were very small.

AC gave his views. There was an element of some students choosing the easiest options. He felt we should provide a spread. Definitely reduce number. Try to go along the lines of badging a block – but not force this. A mix between really advanced options and broader options.

GDWS said he felt that there was some case for occasionally giving the opportunity for lecturers to teach subjects they felt strongly about, even if attendance was small. But we must prune down the number.

It was then agreed to go through the entire current list of options and consider this against the students' recommendations. The committee then compiled a list of options for consideration by the DC. There was general discussion on each subject and who would teach them. Some options were recommended for removal, some for merger, and some appeared under a new title/amended content.

It was agreed that in future years, the MEM option courses should be advertised only one year ahead, in order to maintain a higher degree of flexibility in this part of the course structure. In order to introduce this change in the current year, the consent of all the present third year MEM students would be required. APS agreed to undertake the necessary consultation exercise, and draft the change in regulations needed..

GDWS undertook to put the options list to the DC on Monday.

6. Lecture list for Academic Year 2002/2003

Discussion was deferred

Action MM

7. Course Handbook 2002/3

Discussion was deferred

Action MM

7/6/02. GDWS