

Oxford University Department of Materials Academic Committee

DMAC 18 Minutes of the Academic Committee held at 2.15 pm on Monday 9th June in the first floor Committee Room of 21 Banbury Road.

Present: GT (Chair), AC, JTC, JMS, RIT

In attendance: LJFJ

1. **Apologies:** APS.

2. **Minutes of DMAC 17**

The minutes of DMAC 17 were approved with minor spelling corrections.

3. **Matters Arising**

a) From DMAC 17, 12th May 2003

- (i) *Lecture Questionnaires.* GT has informed DC re. suggested time to hand out questionnaires (beginning of last lecture). GT will remind them again at start of MT03.
- (ii) *General Scheme.* The following lectures have been arranged. GT & ICS to give Introductory lecture on Industrial Visits. The Nanomaterials course will be under the supervision of Prof. Dobson, and will be taught as F & S Nanomaterials I (Drs C. Norenberg & J. Sloan), and F & S Nanomaterials II – Physical Aspects (Dr V. Burlakov & Prof. P Dobson). SGR as ‘3rd year Course Representative’ offered to prepare a paper on possible new Options Courses for DMAC. **Action: SGR**
- (iii) *Team Design Project.* The project supervisors are Prof. Dobson, Dr Martin Carr and Dr Bucknall, Dr Assender, Dr Northover, and Dr Roberts.
- (iv) *MEM Changes.* Have been sent to the Division.

b) From DC, 21st May 2003

No Matters Arising.

4. **Practical Classes**

JPN informed the Committee that the Practical Class paperwork would be put on the Departmental website before the start of MT 03. It would be for internal access only.

Action: JPN

5. **Learning and Teaching in the Collegiate University**

The Committee answered the questions in the document as follows.

Learning and teaching from the student’s perspective.

- The Committee agreed with points 2.2a (i)- (iii) re. the Department’s responsibility to provide of a variety of pedagogic methods, and to distinguish between their uses.
- The Committee agreed that each undergraduate should have a Director of Studies, although pointed out this did occur in some Colleges and was normally his or her College tutor.
- The Committee felt there should not be a pilot scheme and would not wish to participate if such a scheme was initiated.

College-based subject families.

- There was much discussion about the extent to which these operate already within the Department. AC, as DoGS, felt that the Department did try to keep postgraduates and undergraduates in the same Colleges, while the Committee felt that the fact that so few PDFs

have a College affiliation the notion of a subject family including all levels of staff could not be met.

- The Department feel it would be in favour of this set-up but it would require the Conference of Colleges to change its view on PDFs and College membership.

Timing and Interplay with Stint reform.

- The Committee noted this.

6. Distance Learning MSc

GT informed the Committee that the University was keen to encourage part-time, distant learning MSc courses. Two courses running already include: Computing, run over 45 weeks, and Financial Mathematics. The fees from 200 students on the Financial Mathematics course support 5 staff. The Committee considered whether the Department could run such a course. Two possible topics were considered: Ancient Materials and Materials Modelling, but in general the Committee agreed that there was too much work involved with the initiation of such a course.

7. Learning and Teaching Strategy Document (DMAC 18/03)

The Division will adapt this document, written by the EPSC, for use in the QAA. The Committee felt the following needed to be mentioned if the Department were to adopt it.

- *Para 6.1* there is no mention of lectures/Department-based courses.
- *Para 7.2(iii)* no mention of the training of supervisors for graduates.
- *Para 7.3(v)* no mention of the 2 weeks of skills training to be provided for all graduate students.
- *Para 9.1(iii)* mechanisms need to be put in place for monitoring quality assurance and enhancement.
- *Para 10.7* the Committee agreed with the aspiration of limiting administration and bureaucratic burdens on academic staff, but it is yet to occur.
- *Para 12.3* the Committee cannot agree with this statement.

AC agreed to present Section 11 to the IT Committee.

Action: AC

8. Graduate Studies Report (AC) (DMAC 18/04)

AC highlighted the following points.

- 1(a). Gathered fields for overseas students (Jan 31st deadline) will be used for graduate applications to the Department this year. UK students are handled similarly.
- 2. The 2 weeks skills training per year for RC –funded students is likely to be provided through a combination of Departmental and Divisional courses, plus the RC Graduate School. It is under discussion as to how this will cover non-RC-funded students, in particular how the costs for this will be covered.
- 3. The Department's Hetherington Prize winner will attend the Divisional Student Symposium in TT04. It is hoped this Symposium will increase interactions within the Division.
- 4. The Department supported the Division's guidelines that Graduate students should undertake no more than 120 hours of teaching in anyone year, and that for tutorial or class teaching this should include no more than 40 contact hours. This means that currently the Department's TA's are not allowed to undertake tutorial teaching. In the discussion that followed the role of the TA in the teaching lab was examined. There was a consensus that the quality of each TA should be tested more rigorously. JPN (Practical Class Organiser) informed the Committee that the current set up of the TA's and the teaching labs was being examined in detail.

Action: JPN

9. QAA Materials Auditor

The Committee did not feel this was within its remit and no members of the Committee had the time to commit to being a QAA Materials Auditor.

10. *QAA Institutional Audit

The Committee noted the information.

11. A.O.B.

- a) GT informed the Committee about the *Materials Education Workshop* on the 24th June. PJW may attend.
- b) GT asked the Committee whether the Department should consider *Teaching Teams*. The Committee felt this was neither required nor appropriate.
- c) AC informed the committee that The Graduate Studies Secretary or LJFJ might attend the meeting on Graduate Admissions.
- d) *UG Subject Brochure*. A new Materials brochure is required. AC/MC are to liaise over revisions and to investigate a firm that could professionally set out the brochure. A deadline for February 2004 was set. **Action: AC**

The meeting ended at 5.15pm. The next meeting is scheduled for 2.00 pm, Monday week 3, Michaelmas term.