

Oxford University Department of Materials Academic Committee

DMAC 19 Minutes of the Academic Committee held at 2.15 pm on Monday 24th October in the first floor Committee Room of 21 Banbury Road.

Present: GT (Chair), AC, HEA, SGR, JMS,

In attendance: LJFJ, Oliver King (Chair of JCCG), Arvi Luoma (Chair of JCCU)

1. **Apologies:** APS, JPN.

2. **JCCG Chairman's Report (OK)**

OK presented the results of the End of Year Questionnaire given to all graduate students. The number of returned questionnaires was low, the JCCG hope to improve on this next year by providing hardcopy to all students. Overall, the respondents do not enjoy the mandatory broadening course, (Agenda item 11); find the writing course useful but feel in some cases that the feedback on their literature reviews is not specific enough. AC assured OK that all reviewers are asked to provide specific feedback but that at times it was difficult to appoint suitably specialised readers for all reviews due to the small size of the Department.

3. **JCCU Chairman's Report (AL)**

AL introduced the newly elected JCCU Chair, Markus Mittermaier, second year MEM undergraduate.

AL informed the Committee that the JCCU has a number of issues concerning the library. The specific problems are: the absence of a librarian; the opening hours for the library office being only in the morning, hence access to the reserve collection is limited; the number of loan copies of books from the reading lists. LJFJ agreed to refer these comments to the Academic Librarian, and alert students re. the opening hours of the library office when they become more fixed. AL/MM agreed to write a letter to the Academic librarian, Dr David Bucknall, with a list of the books that require more copies.

Action: LJFJ/AL/MM

MM presented the details of the Industrial tour; more funding and an academic staff member to accompany the tour were still required. This term's Freshers event is due to be held in 5th week. LJFJ agreed to ask the Department for an advance to the organising students. **Action: LJFJ**

4. **Introduction of the EngD Scheme (PSG)**

Dr Patrick Grant asked the Committee to endorse the Department's bid to the University to run an Engineering Doctorate scheme, and to fully participate in the ongoing collaboration with the University of Birmingham in the ENGMET (Engineered Metals for High Performance Applications in Aerospace and Related Technologies) EngD programme. An EngD student will be fully-funded for 4 years of study, 3 years is committed to research, and 1 year of taught courses. If registered in the ENGMET programme, the year of full-time study is spread evenly throughout the 4-year course. After due discussion concerning the nature and quality of EngD research projects, quality assurance research procedures for research, and the type of teaching to be provided, the Committee agreed to endorse the scheme. (The scheme was referred to the Subfaculty for further review).

5. **Membership and Remit of Committee / Director of Studies**

The Committee received paper DMAC 19/2. The Postgraduate panel is to consist of : HEA, AC, JMT (non-DMAC member). The makeup of Undergraduate panel is held over to DMAC 20.

Action: GT

The Chair reminded Committee members of the guidelines circulated to all staff members on working as an effective Committee, in particular, all members are expected to read all papers before attending the meeting.

6. Minutes of DMAC 18

The minutes were accepted.

7. Matters arising

a) From DMAC 18, 9th June 2003

- i. Option Course Review – SGR asked for the matter to be held over to Hilary term.
Action: SGR
- ii. Practical Class Protocols – JPN is putting these online on a term-by-term basis.
- iii. IT Learning and Teaching Strategy – LJFJ agreed to send it to the Chair of the IT Committee.
Action: LJFJ
- iv. Subject Brochure – AC informed the Committee that PJW, MC, AMcK and himself had begun the redesigning of the subject brochure. Martin Carr (MC) was the designated Chair of this subcommittee.

b) From DC, 21st May 2003

There were no matters arising from this meeting.

8. Practical Classes (JPN)

This matter was held over to DMAC 20.

9. Introduction of Graduate Skills Training (AC)

AC presented paper DMAC 19/4, which asked the Committee for any specific ideas they may have for Graduate Skills training. The Committee suggested the following ideas: research skills (statistical treatment of data, data analysis), a 2-day writing course, and a team project. The JCCG, in their meeting, had been in favour of the proposals and had requested a poster presentation training session and competition. AC also suggested: using the broadening mandatory assessed course, a 1 day industrial research seminar, and extend industrial visits to PGs. The latter is thought to be unviable due to the numbers of student who already must undertake the industrial visits.

There were concerns that ½ day courses were not long enough for many of the topics presented by AC and that fewer subjects with longer courses might be considered. However, AC informed the Committee that he wished for the onus to provide the courses to be on the University and the Division, and for the Division to therefore control the additional finances (£100/day/student) but Departments should continue with their existing procedures. The Division also feel that non-EPSRC funded students should also to attend the courses. DMAC agreed with both this proposal, and the recommendation from AC that the Department wish for the Division to take the lead in organising further courses. Further information from the Division on the start date, and scale of provision of centrally-run courses is anticipated

10. Divisional Learning and Teaching Strategy

It was suggested the EngD should be included under “Future Strategy”. LJFJ agreed to refer to DMAC 18 and contact the Division re. any changes previously suggested. **Action: LJFJ**

11. Examiners Reports

The Committee reviewed the Examiners’ reports.

12. Examination Conventions

In light of recommendations from the EPSC Notes of Guidance on Examinations and Assessment, it was agreed to alter the Conventions to include a description as to how the reconciliation of marks occurs in the case of disagreement between markers. The Conventions were also updated to reflect the current academic year. **Action: GT**

13. Examination Classifications

- i. Classified BA – the EPSC are once again looking at the possibility of awarding classified BAs after the Part I in 4-yr undergraduate masters courses. The Committee remain opposed to the proposal.

14. Divisional Widening Participation Fund

The Committee fully endorsed MC's proposal to the Division.

15. Admissions Procedures 2003*

The Committee approved the procedures.

16. Second-choice Subject Applications for Admissions 2004*

The Committee approved the procedures.

17. Chemistry's withdrawal from School of Natural Sciences

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Subfaculty that the Department withdraw from the Honour School of Natural Sciences. GT agreed to talk to the Departments of Earth Sciences and Chemistry over the provision of supplementary subjects. **Action: GT**

18. Any Other Business

- i. IT Academic Computing Development Team had put a call out for proposals. The Committee no suitable proposals.
- ii. Prof. Brian Derby has agreed to be the External Examiner for the Materials Science, and Materials, Economics and Management undergraduate courses. His tenure will commence in MT 04 and will last 2 years in the first instance.

The meeting closed at 4.45 pm.

The next meeting is on Monday 24th November at 2 pm in 21 BR.