

DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS
ACADEMIC COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June, 2001

Present	APS PRW SGR AKPL AC RIT JMS DGP MM	Chairman Secretary
Others	Chris Ogle, Chair of JCCU Stuart Wilkinson, Chair of JCCG	

Item	Discussions and Decisions	Action
(a)	(b)	(c)
1. Chairman's Address.	APS introduced and welcomed Stuart Wilkinson, Chair to the JCCG, and Chris Ogle, Chair of the JCCU.	
2. JCCU Minutes.	Chris Ogle referred the Committee to the JCCU Minutes and highlighted the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <u>JCCU Lecture Questionnaires</u>. It was noted that the overall scores were higher this term and it was felt that this was the result of improved teaching. (b) <u>1st Year Maths Classes</u>. DMAC5 had discussed whether additional 'mop-up' maths classes should be provided to first year students. It felt that on balance it was better to reduce the sizes of maths classes from 6/7 to 4. The matter would be reconsidered in the light of the performance of students in Materials compared with that of students in Earth Sciences in Prelims. (c) <u>Industrial Tour</u>. Chris Ogle confirmed that a student working group had been formed to organise the next industrial tour. It had already met and decided that the tour should be to Sweden and Finland at around Easter 2002. He reported that the working party had received several useful responses from the DC to requests for contacts in Finland and Sweden, and that it would welcome more. 	APS
3. JCCG Minutes.	1. Stuart Wilkinson referred the Committee to the JCCG Minutes and highlighted the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <u>Graduate Questionnaire</u>. The JCCG is devising a questionnaire relating about a more structured programme of graduate lectures and to seek views on the departmental colloquia. The questionnaire will be distributed to all postgraduates over the summer. (b) <u>Skills Training</u>. DGP tabled copies of an email he had sent Stuart Wilkinson summarising the points that were discussed at a meeting between DGP, APS and Dr Fiona Spensley from the Institute for the Advancement of University Learning (IAUL). The items discussed at the meeting were: (i) lectures in powerpoint, (ii) video feedback, (iii) IPR, (iv) project management, (v) writing of theses and papers, (vi) CVs and interviews. These items will be discussed again at the next JCCG meeting. 	Stuart Wilkinson

	<p>2. There will be a JCCG meeting on July 19 to progress postgraduate matters.</p> <p>3. APS thanked Stuart Wilkinson, who then left the meeting.</p>	
4. Minutes of Last Meeting.	1. Agreed and Signed.	
5. Matters Arising	<p>1. <u>Student Records</u>. Student questionnaires and data storage mandates had now been sent out to all undergraduates on course. Most had been completed and returned and MM was chasing up late returns.</p> <p>2. <u>Membership of ILT</u>. APS confirmed that the Departmental policy on membership of the ILT was completely neutral: it neither discouraged nor encouraged any staff member to join. This is also the stated policy of the Divisional Board.</p>	MM
6. Post Graduate Matters.	<p>1. <u>Post-Graduate Admissions</u>. DGP tabled the status of current postgraduate admissions. All EPSRC-DTA places have now been allocated.</p> <p>2. <u>Induction Course</u>. It was confirmed that the date for the postgraduate induction course would be Monday 1st Oct (Week 0) from 9.00 – 5.00. The content of the induction course will be as detailed in Minute 8 of DMAC2. Postgraduates will be notified about the induction course at their home addresses.</p>	DGP
7. Student Sponsorship.	MM confirmed that student sponsorship interviews with Alcan would take place on 13 June 2001. Nine people have applied for sponsorship. The committee was reminded that the Johnson-Matthey sponsorship is now allocated to a prize of £1000 for the best performance in Prelims. The prize will be awarded in the autumn for the best performance in Prelims 2001.	
8. The running of practicals.	<p>1. GT (Practical Class Organiser) joined the committee for this item, and Chris Ogle also contributed to the discussion. The background to the discussion was the set of comments reported in the minutes of the Trinity Term JCCU and JCCG meetings, and the earlier discussion by DMAC reported in DMAC 4. GT had responded in writing to the JCCU comments and Minute 6 of DMAC 4, and his response was included in the papers for this meeting. GT also tabled a written response to the JCCG comments.</p> <p>2. The points raised by the JCCU were discussed in the light of GT's comments. The following points were agreed in response to a-h of Minute 7.1 of the JCCU TT01 meeting:</p> <p>a. It is acknowledged that JDs are unable to answer all possible questions. It is not feasible to require that all JDs to know all 22 of the undergraduate practicals – it would require too much of their time to learn them all. However, measures will be taken, as described below, to enhance the familiarity of JDs with a wider range of practicals without requiring any further JD time.</p> <p>b. The following practicals were identified as having problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diffusion - Casting - SEM - Corrosion (the guidance notes are 'unclear' and the practical seems to be temperamental) <p>It was agreed that Chris Ogle will ask students to meet the relevant SDs to identify clearly the problems with these practicals. APS is willing to take part in these discussions if needed.</p> <p>c. It had been agreed that JDs may absent themselves from the practical lab when there are no students present, provided they remain accessible by phone. However, this practice will stop when the recommendation given below is implemented next term.</p> <p>d. Badges will be issued to identify JDs.</p> <p>e. All printers are now working satisfactorily.</p> <p>f. Students are given a week to complete each practical, including the write-up. Therefore, starting in 7th week should not be disadvantageous. In the worst case,</p>	<p>Chris Ogle</p> <p>GT</p>

	<p>students starting a practical on Thursday of 7th week may need Monday of 8th week to complete the experimental work. If the corresponding SD is on duty that Monday then it will not be possible for students to get their write-up marked on that Monday. However, it should be possible to arrange another time with the SD to have the write-up marked in the presence of the student before the end of term, especially as in future there will be so few practicals to be marked in 8th week.</p> <p>g. The complaint about penalties for late submission of practical write-ups was considered. After the meeting it was pointed out that all second year students had been notified both in writing and orally at the beginning of MT 00 by Dr Taylor about the procedures for submission of reports and penalties for late submission. For example, in Dr Taylor's handout given to all second year students at the beginning of MT 00 it states:</p> <p><i>You must complete your report within seven days of starting but you are encouraged to finish it the evening you complete the experimental work. The Practical Class Technician will stamp the page on the day you start and again when the report is completed. You then need to take it to the SD for marking within the following week when he is on duty so that it can be marked before you start the next experiment.... Practical not handed in on time will be penalised; practicals handed in very late or not at all will be given no marks.</i></p> <p>Furthermore, on 15/11/00 Dr Taylor sent an email to all second year students which includes the following passage:</p> <p><i>Practicals that are marked after the end of term have the marks awarded reduced by the Part I examiners. The only practicals to be free of this penalty will be those started in 7th week and even some of these should be marked before end of term. The usual penalty is to reduce a late practical by one grade, a late, late practical by 2 grades and a very late practical by 3 grades. Therefore, handing in a book at the end of this term with nothing marked will reduce your overall grade by 6 points. In the other terms the reduction for lateness will be up to 10 points since there are 4 graded practicals.</i></p> <p>Although this information was not included in the course handbook the committee decided, in the light of this information received after the meeting, that it will recommend to the Part I Examiners for 2002 that penalties should be applied, because students had been adequately notified.</p> <p>3. The following points were agreed either at the meeting, or since the meeting, for inclusion in the course handbook:</p> <p>a. Practicals MAY NOT be started without permission for REASONS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY. Any student who starts a practical without permission, i.e. who does not get the practical date-stamped, will be stopped. The PCT will record that the practical had been started without permission on the student record sheet, and the Part I Examiners are recommended to deduct 4 marks. Any student who starts a practical without permission is also liable to disciplinary action.</p> <p>b. The write-up for each practical must be completed and date-stamped by the PCT (Practical Class Technician – currently Paula Taylor-Green) by <u>2.00pm one week</u> after the practical was started. If a practical write-up is submitted to the PCT for completion date-stamping later than one week from the date when the practical was started, the write-up is deemed to be <u>late</u>. This is no different from before, but it is a clear statement for the record.</p> <p>c. The Part I Examiners are recommended to deduct marks for late write-ups. DMAC recommends that Part I Examiners deduct one mark from the mark allocated by the SD for every week or part of a week the write-up is late. Practical that are not done, or where the write-up is completion date-stamped more than 4 weeks late, should be given no marks.</p> <p>d. A timetable of marking sessions will be drawn up and posted in the Teaching Lab soon after the beginning of term, in consultation with students and SDs. If it turns out</p>	
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	<p>that a student is unable to attend an agreed marking session, then the student may arrange with the PCT an alternative marking session. Only one alternative marking session may be arranged for any one practical write-up, unless the student can convince the PCT that s/he was ill. If the student fails to show up at the alternative marking session then the practical book must be submitted for marking within 4 weeks of starting the practical, or at the end of term whichever is sooner. The practical will then be marked without a viva, and DMAC recommends that the Part I Examiners deduct two marks from the mark allocated by the SD. A student who misses the two agreed marking sessions, and who fails to submit the practical for marking within 4 weeks of starting the practical, or at the end of term, whichever is sooner, will not have the practical marked and will receive no marks for the practical.</p> <p>e. DMAC recommends that Part I Examiners deduct 1 mark from any practical that is marked without it being stamped with the completion date. The only exceptions should be those practicals that are dated and marked by the SD within 7 days from the starting date.</p> <p>f. Students must hand in their Practical Books to the PCT at the end of term for marking, safe-keeping and transferring marks to student records. DMAC recommends that Part I Examiners deduct <u>4 marks</u> if a student fails to hand in their Practical Book at the end of term, and any unmarked practicals will <u>not</u> be marked.</p> <p>g. It is the responsibility of students to look after the Practical Book and record card during term. If a student loses both then all marks not recorded by the PCT elsewhere will be lost. If the student loses the Practical Book, but not the record card, then the Part I Examiners will decide a penalty in conjunction with the Proctors.</p> <p>4. It was noted that JDs occasionally find that few students are doing practicals when they are on duty. In the past they have been permitted to leave the Lab, provided they remain accessible by phone. The committee decided that this was an inappropriate use of their time, especially when they were being paid (handsomely) by the department. In future JDs will be asked to use their free time in the Lab to familiarise themselves further with practicals selected by the Practical Class Organiser. JDs will be asked to write a short report on these practicals (no more than half a page for each practical) to identify any weaknesses in the practical itself and in the guidance notes.</p> <p>5. To improve the functioning and demonstrating of practicals it was agreed that SDs and JDs will work together in 0th week of each term to ensure that the practical is working correctly and to identify any problems in the guidance notes. The SD and JD will meet briefly (about 15 minutes) to discuss how the practical is intended to work, and to allow the SD to flag up any potential pitfalls. The JD will then try the practical by him/herself. The SD and JD will have a follow-up discussion of no more than 45 minutes to identify any problems with the practical. The purpose is to ensure that the JD can demonstrate the practical satisfactorily and that the practical works. It will also enable the SD to tell the JD what s/he is looking for in the write-up – information that is valuable for the JD to pass onto students. It is expected that for a practical that is working well this will take no more than 1 hour of the SD time in 0th week, but it should have a very beneficial impact on the running of practicals. The Practical Class Organiser will circulate a timetable of initial meetings in 0th week between SDs and JDs.</p>	<p>GT</p> <p>GT</p>
9. 1 st year course	<p>1. APS reported that Earth Sciences looked favourably on the suggestion of sharing teaching of certain courses in the first year (other than maths) and APS will try to hold discussions with members of Earth Sciences over the summer.</p> <p>2. The changes in legislation required to reduce the number of ‘Fraser courses’ for students of Materials in the first year from 5 to 4 are being drafted. The changes will come into effect from October 1 2001 for first examination in June 2002.</p>	<p>APS</p> <p>APS</p>
10. Engineering and Society.	<p>1. <u>The current position.</u> Currently, MSOM students attend 16 lectures (in fact they are recommended to attend 32 lectures by Dr Steve New of SBS) on “Introduction to Management”, which are assessed by a 2000-word Management Case Study, 8 lectures on “Safety and Risk”, which are assessed by a 2000-word safety assessment, and 8 lectures on “The Engineering Profession”. The latter are assessed by a 2000-word essay selected from a list of materials-related topics devised by the Chairman of Subfaculty of</p>	

	<p>Materials, or on another topic suggested by the candidate and approved by the Chairman of Subfaculty.</p> <p>2. <u>Changes agreed already for 2001/02.</u> The 16 hours on “Introduction to Management” will be replaced by 16 hours on “Entrepreneurship and New Ventures”. The lengths of all essays will be increased from 2000 to 3000 words, to be consistent with the Engineers.</p> <p>3. <u>Changes being implemented by Engineering Science for 2001/02.</u> The 8-lecture course on “Safety and Risk” is being expanded to a 16-lecture course entitled “Safety, Risk and the Environment”. The 8 new lectures will be on “Environmental Impact” and “Sustainable Development”. The case study set by the lecturer within Engineering Science could be based on any of these 16 lectures. The 8-lecture course on “The Engineering Profession” will be replaced by a 12-lecture course entitled “Technology: Past, Present and Future”.</p> <p>4. <u>Issues for DMAC.</u> If MSOM students attended all these courses the loading for “Engineering and Society” would increase from 32 to 44 lectures. This hike in the student load may be unacceptable. However, the requirements of accreditation also need to be considered carefully.</p> <p>5. <u>Decision:</u> From October 1 2001, for first examination in June 2003, the “Engineering and Society” package will comprise: (a) 16 hours on “Entrepreneurship and New Ventures”, to be assessed by a 3000-word business plan. (b) 16 hours on “Safety, Risk and the Environment”, to be assessed by a 3000-word safety case study. This will not change the current student loading of 32 hours for “Engineering and Society”, while retaining essential broadening elements for accreditation. The third essay is dropped altogether to increase the weighting of the above two topics from 13.33 marks to 20 marks each in Part I. APS will draft the changes in the legislation over the summer.</p> <p>6. <u>Remission for the Language Option.</u> Currently students who take the Language Option enjoy remission from the management case study and the essay on a materials-related topic suggested by the Chairman of Subfaculty. The committee decided that from October 1 2001, for first examination in June 2003, students who take the Language Option may be given remission from <i>either</i> the business plan <i>or</i> the safety case study. APS will draft the changes in the legislation over the summer.</p>	<p>APS</p> <p>APS</p>
<p>11. Paper from Divisional Board on reviews of undergraduate courses</p>	<p>The paper from the Academic Committee of the Divisional Board was discussed briefly and the following responses were agreed to the 9 points raised at the end of the paper:</p> <p>(i) We consider our current 3rd year taught options too short at just 8 lectures each. We welcome the suggestion that the smallest size of a taught option should be 16 lectures, and also that shared taught options should be 32 lectures or more, in multiples of 16. In the case of projects we agree that the minimum size should be one term, and the maximum one year.</p> <p>(ii) Our taught options will continue to be given in the 3rd year of MSOM and 3rd and 4th years of MEM. The entire 4th year of MSOM is devoted to a research project. In the past we have accepted a few students from other universities to undertake research projects with us for a term, and such an arrangement is currently being considered with Princeton. Oxford students in MPSD who wish to undertake a research project lasting a minimum of one term, and a maximum of one year, would also be welcome. 4th year Chemistry students have undertaken their part II projects with us in the past, although never more than 1 or 2 students a year. We would welcome more.</p> <p>(iii) We understand the desirability of short options in earlier years, not least to provide essential grounding in the subject before students reach the 3rd year. But we are opposed to any options in the 2nd year because (a) all our 2nd year is essential (i.e. not optional) material, and (b) we intend to make as many conceptual connections between different aspects of the 2nd year core course as</p>	

	<p>possible to bring out the relationships between structure, properties, processing and performance of materials. Therefore, to have self-contained, stand-alone options in the second year would undermine our entire approach to teaching materials science. Our previous experience in offering a 'supplementary subject' in materials science was that the considerable additional teaching effort was not rewarded by anywhere near sufficient students taking the subject.</p> <p>(iv) We see ourselves primarily as exporters of options because (a) so much of undergraduate physics, chemistry and engineering of materials is taught in our courses, and (b) some of our options may be seen as interesting applications of physics, chemistry and engineering to materials. Possible examples include biomaterials and nanomaterials. We are in the process of thinking through our 3rd year options, so we are unable to provide a complete list, but we will be developing some options with a view to making them more widely available. Hilary Term of the 3rd year would seem to be a good time for shared options. The challenge will be to retain a reasonably advanced level of treatment and yet accessible to students from other disciplines.</p> <p>(v) Not applicable.</p> <p>(vi) We already have a language option.</p> <p>(vii) From October 1 2001 students who take the language option will be given remission from one of the two new components of 'Engineering and Society', to each of which 20 marks are allocated in Part I from a total of 850 marks. The report of the Language Centre will be used to allocate a mark out of 20 in lieu of the Engineering and Society component the student has dropped. The mark will reflect the improvement in the student's proficiency in the language studied. The use of transcripts should allow a statement of language proficiency in an absolute sense. We are keen to minimize costs, and organizing classes divisionally will enable us to reduce costs by grouping our students with others in classes of 16 or less.</p> <p>(viii) The Academic Committee has decided to recommend to the Subfaculty that we implement second year examinations. Our thinking is that this will reduce the pressure on students by spreading the examining load evenly over the second and third years. It will also encourage students not to take the second year too casually. One possibility is that we have 3 general papers at the end of the second year, and the fourth general paper and the two options papers at the end of the third year.</p> <p>(ix) Currently, both our loads and our weightings are evenly spread over the four years of our degree courses MSOM and MEM. We will keep under review the question of whether to allocate more weight to the 3rd year of MSOM. As the 4th year of MSOM is a research project it is qualitatively different from the taught elements that comprise Part I. Therefore, we see no reason to allocate more weight to the 4th year.</p> <p>APS will communicate these responses to the Divisional Board.</p>	APS
12. Lecture List for MT and General Scheme.	<p>1. A number of changes to the lecture list were noted and discussed. Concern was expressed at the difficulties we face in providing 20 options next academic year owing to staff shortages.</p> <p>2. Undergraduate options will also be listed under postgraduate lectures. Postgraduate students who take these options should also attend the tutorials/classes arranged for them. The tutor may claim the 'special supervision fee' from the university for tutoring postgraduate students.</p> <p>3. Postgraduate training will be listed separately from postgraduate teaching in the lecture list.</p>	<p>APS</p> <p>APS</p> <p>APS</p>
13. Any Other Business.	None.	

NEXT MEETING: Monday week 2 at 2.15 in the Committee Room of 21 Banbury Road.