

**DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS**  
**ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November, 2001**

Present:	APS PRW AKPL AC RIT JMS MM	Chairman      Secretary
Others	S. Wilkinson, Chair of JCCG G. Hodge, Chair of JCCU	

Item	Discussions and Decisions	Action
(a)	(b)	(c)
1. Apologies for absence.	SGR.	
2. Minutes of the JCCG.	<p>1. Stuart Wilkinson referred the Committee to the minutes of the JCCG meeting held on October 9, 2001 and highlighted the following points:</p> <p>a. <u>Graduate Schools</u>. Only one person has given feedback on the Graduate Schools. However, several people were due to go to the Graduate School in the near future and so more feedback would be forthcoming. AC reported the decision by SMT that the EPSRC Graduate School would remain compulsory only for EPSRC funded students, because funding for other graduate students would have to be found from sources other than EPSRC.</p> <p>b. <u>Finance and Payment Issues</u>. RMP has implemented a new system for commissioning and paying for work done by graduate students. A form is to be completed by the student and counter-signed by the member of staff for whom the work will be done. RMP then issues a letter confirming the nature and timing of the work to be done, and the payment. When the work has been completed the student may claim for payment after obtaining the signature of the member of staff concerned confirming that the work has been done. No payments will be made to students who do not adhere to these new procedures.</p> <p>c. <u>Graduate Freshers Party</u>. It was reported that the Freshers' Party did not happen. S. Wilkinson will find out why it did not go ahead and see if another can be planned for HT.</p> <p>2. APS thanked Stuart Wilkinson who then left the meeting.</p>	S. Wilkinson
3. Minutes of the JCCU.	<p>1. Georgia Hodge referred the Committee to the minutes of the JCCU meeting held on October 23, 2001 and highlighted the following points:</p> <p>a. <u>Practicals</u>. Students appear to be happier with the new system for marking practicals.</p> <p>b. <u>Industrial Tour</u>. APS expressed some concern that there were still only two visits for the Industrial tour confirmed. APS will email C. Ogle in order to get an update on the tour.</p> <p>c. <u>Library Hours</u>. Students were happy with the new library hours.</p> <p>d. <u>Residential Weekend</u>. It was reported that the two students who attended the residential weekend run by the Materials Subject Centre at Liverpool did not find it of great benefit. There was a lot of travelling and little information was gained.</p>	APS

	<p>e. <u>Maths Classes</u>. It was reported that, from limited feedback, students were happy with the reduced class sizes in mathematics. There will be a collection in January which should give an indication of how well Materials students are doing compared with those in Earth Sciences.</p> <p>f. <u>Second Year Examinations</u>. It was noted that the general feeling from the JCCU towards second year exams was very negative. APS reported that he had put the arguments raised at the JCCU to the Subfaculty in 4<sup>th</sup> Week. However, the Subfaculty comprehensively rejected the arguments put forward by students, and decided to implement second year examinations. It was noted that second year examinations could not be introduced before the academic year beginning October 2005. Several questions will have to be resolved: (a) will resits be allowed? (b) can a student withdraw and retake the exam the following year? (c) what weightings should be given to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year exams?</p> <p>2. APS thanked Georgia Hodge, who then left the meeting.</p>	
4. Minutes of Last Meeting.	<p>1. The following amendments were noted:</p> <p>a. Item 4.5 (second paragraph) the word “course” should be implemented after: “some students felt there was too much information and that the <u>course</u> should be run over two days.”</p> <p>b. Item 4.7 should read “APS reported that Sarah Haigh had won the Alcan <u>and</u> Armourers and Brasiers’ sponsorship and Georgia Hodge the Johnson-Matthey prize. The Johnson-Matthey prize of £1,000 is now the largest prize within the department.”</p> <p>2. The minutes, with the amendments were agreed and signed.</p>	
5. Matters Arising.	<p>1. <u>Senior Demonstrating in practicals and involvement of PDRAs</u>. APS reported that he had sent an email out to post-docs requesting volunteers which had elicited some very welcome responses.</p> <p>2. <u>Undergraduate Prospectus entries</u>. APS referred the Committee to the attached final copy of the Undergraduate Prospectus entries for information.</p> <p>3. <u>Supplementary Subjects</u>. APS had yet to draft the legislation to change the remission for the supplementary subjects.</p> <p>4. <u>Graduate Provision</u>. APS referred the Committee to the response which had been attached. AC reported that our Graduate Provision was in line with other departments.</p>	APS
6. Draft Lecture List for Hilary Term.	<p>1. APS reported that the draft lecture list for Hilary Term was still not complete.</p>	APS
7. Summary of Internal Part I and Part II Examiners’ Reports.	<p>1. APS referred the Committee to the attached summary of Internal Part I and Part II Examiners’ Reports. He highlighted the question “<i>How should a question be framed so that a third class honours student can get a minimum of 40%?</i>” as an essential characteristic of any Finals examination question. There seemed little doubt that for some time our Finals examination questions have been slanted towards more competent candidates, and that less competent candidates have been disabled from displaying their abilities as fully as they should have been. <i>A well-constructed examination question is one in which all candidates can display their abilities to the full, however strong or weak those abilities may be.</i> The committee makes the following recommendations to Part I examiners: general paper questions should have a simple discursive beginning, and that subsequent parts of the question should become progressively more searching. There should be no entirely mathematical questions on the general papers, because some</p>	

	<p>candidates who may know the basics of the subject may be entirely unable to attempt such a question. APS will contact JTC (Chair of Part I) to ensure that all staff involved in proposing questions are informed of the new style that DMAC is recommending for general paper questions.</p>	APS
8. Examining Conventions.	<p>1. APS referred the Committee to the attached final version of the Examining Conventions. He noted that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. While examiners have the authority to modify the conventions it seems only fair and reasonable that they should inform candidates of any modifications they intend to make by no later than the end of Hilary Term preceding the examination.</li> <li>b. The Chair of Part II (JMS) should check the marking guidance sheet used by Part II examiners to assess Part II theses. All Part II candidates should be notified of any amendments the Part II examiners intend to make by no later than the end of Hilary Term preceding the examination.</li> <li>c. For the purposes of record-keeping the committee recommended that Part II examiners keep a terse written report, of no more than 3 short sentences, of each Part II viva. The report should state: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the extent to which the work reported in the thesis is the candidate's own work</li> <li>• whether the candidate answered the examiners' questions satisfactorily</li> <li>• the provisional marks awarded by each reader of the thesis and the agreed final mark.</li> </ul> <p>A more detailed report will be required if the viva makes a difference to the candidates' overall degree classification.</p> </li> </ol>	<p>JTC, JMS</p> <p>JMS</p> <p>JMS</p>
9. Student Load Apportionment.	<p>1. APS referred the Committee to the attached student load apportionment papers and noted that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. For MS/MSOM students, the student apportionment had changed very slightly.</li> <li>b. For MEM students, there was no change in the student apportionments.</li> <li>c. EMS apportionments had been done by Jane Frew.</li> </ol>	
10. Common Contract Calculations.	<p>1. APS referred the Committee to the attached Common Contract Calculations. He noted that the purpose of the exercise was to enable all new lecturers to be issued a contract stating that they would not be asked to do more than 360 units of teaching a year, where a tutorial counts as one unit, a lecture as three units and a class as two units. Other forms of teaching such as senior demonstrating are also included, but the calculation excludes examining and administration related to teaching. The result for Materials is 369 units, which takes into account sabbatical leave and the fact that the post held by JBP is unlikely to be refilled in the near future.</p> <p>2. PRW noted that some EMS options courses were being given to just 2 or 3 students. It was agreed that this was not an efficient use of our teaching resources. APS will raise this point with Steve Sheard.</p>	APS
11. Student Course Experience Questionnaire.	<p>1. APS referred the Committee to the attached copy of the Student Course Experience Questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed by Dr Keith Trigwell of IAUL, and has already been used in several departments and faculties within the University with the support of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic. The questionnaire is incisive and will yield valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of our teaching. This information will be valuable in helping us to redesign the MS course. It was agreed that the questionnaire will be given to all undergraduates next term. The questionnaire will be analysed by Dr Trigwell and colleagues, and the results will be conveyed to DMAC.</p>	APS
12. Learning	<p>1. APS referred the Committee to the attached email from Will Moore (Chairman of</p>	

outcomes.	Subfaculty of Engineering Science) requesting that all Materials lecturers of the EMS course provide learning outcomes for their lectures. It was noted that EMS was recently accredited by the IoM for 5 years. APS will convey the views of the committee to Will Moore and seek clarification about what it is that is being accredited.	APS
14. National Teaching Fellowship Scheme 2001.	1. APS outlined the scheme and invited any interested member of the department to apply.	
15. Science and Engineering Ambassadors.	1. APS summarised the attached papers and encouraged interested members of staff to get involved if they felt they had sufficient time.	
16. Any Other Business.	None.	

**NEXT MEETING: Monday, January 21 at 2.15 in the Committee Room of 21 BR**

APS 01/01/02