

Minutes of Teaching Committee – December 7th 2006

Present: Alan Hinchcliffe (AH), Garry Procter (GP), Andrew Regan (AR), Tim Wallace (TW), Mark Whiteley (MWW) and Richard Winpenny (Chair, REPW).

1. Apologies were received from Sarah Heath
2. The minutes of the meeting of October 24th 2006 were approved.
3. ***Degree classification by algorithm.*** After consideration of the analysis produced by Mrs Dorothy Lovett it was agreed that the School should move to method A for deciding degree classifications at boundaries. Two additional clauses would be added to the School's practice.
 - (i) Where a student is within 0.5% of a borderline we will ask the external examiners to automatically round up and award the higher degree (i.e. 69.5 would round to 70%).
 - (ii) When a student's final mark is more than 0.5%, but not more than 2.0% below the borderline, we will apply the algorithm.
 - (ii) In the highly unlikely case of a student with written marks above a borderline, but who is below the borderline because of a poor project mark we will request the external examiners look very carefully at the project mark to ensure the student has received the correct mark.

Preliminary discussions with two external examiners (Profs. David Cole-Hamilton and Richard Taylor), suggest this proposal will be acceptable. However Prof Taylor requested that the external examiners meet with students informally during the visit in June to allow them to assess the quality of the student body (rather than individual students). REPW suggested we attempt to arrange this.

ACTION: REPW to take proposal to Management Team and circulate to external examiners.

ACTION: REPW to speak to Mrs Lovett about arranging a suitable cohort of students to meet the externals in June.

4. REPW reported that Dr Jonathan Agger will supervise the first year second semester measurement laboratory course.
5. TW and GP reported good progress has been made by Dr Maria Limniou in devising pre-lab exercises and transferring them to Web-CT. TW reported that a new appointment also working on Web-CT will begin in early January, building a significant team in the area.
6. A proposal on a revised 3rd year practical component for the B.Sc. stream was discussed. AH and TW reported that the Physical and Organic teaching groups felt a change was needed. It was decided that the proposal was worth further development, and it was agreed that Dr Agger be asked to lead on taking this forward, with input from REPW and in consultation with Dr Andrew Horn.

ACTION: REPW to speak to Dr Agger.

7. The laboratory appeal group has been set up under GP's chairmanship. The other members are Dr Micklefield, Dr Godfrey and Prof Yeates. GP stated that he hoped to be able to report some progress by the next teaching committee.

ACTION: GP to report to next teaching committee meeting.

8. TW reported that the procedure for on-line self-assessment for Chemistry 2 was now established. Staff have been set a deadline of January 10th to produce 12 questions for this exercise. 2 from 9 staff have already responded. The tests will be taken unsupervised, but we will monitor whether students have done the test. If they have not done the test we will regard them as being in breach of Work and Attendance policy, just as if they had failed to attend a laboratory session.

ACTION: When date for test is established AR to inform 2nd year that taking the test is required.

9. In response to the request to begin considering lecture content for the 2007-8 session, the Organic and Physical sections have set-up working groups. It was decided that Inorganic should be requested to do the same.

During the discussion it became apparent that "horizontal" integration is not good within years. Therefore it was suggested the working groups meet to look at this.

ACTIONS: REPW to contact Prof Faulkner to request Inorganic set up a working group. REPW to contact HoTS to suggest a joint working group to look at horizontal integration.

10. The minutes of Staff Student Liaison Committee were circulated. A discussion of pre-labs followed. TW reported that the newly-appointed Learning Technologist (Richard Jardine) will be expected to make a significant contribution to our existing development of online pre-lab exercises, with the objective of ensuring that a comprehensive set is available for the lab classes in 2007-8. It was felt that we needed a firm policy, which will appear in the Blue Book, on student requirements with regard to pre-labs. GP agreed to produce a draft for next teaching committee.

ACTION: GP to produce a draft policy on pre-labs.

11. Applications for the National Teaching Fellowship scheme are now being sought. REPW will circulate information to all staff shortly.

ACTION: REPW to circulate.

R. E. P. Winpenny, Dec 7th 2006