

Minutes for Teaching Committee – 12.00 Oct 24th 2006

Present: Sarah Heath (SLH), Garry Procter (GP), Andrew Regan (AR), Tim Wallace (TW), Mark Whiteley (MWW) and Richard Winpenny (Chair, REPW).

1. Apologies were received from Barbara Helm and Alan Hinchcliffe (AH).
2. **Structure of teaching committee.** The structure of the new teaching committee was presented by REPW. There was a short discussion of the new roles. The need for the sectional representatives (SLH, AH and TW) to consult regularly with teaching sections on changes was stressed. The division of duties between AR and MWW will evolve.
3. **Decisions on Borderline Candidates.** REPW tabled the university regulations on methods for making decisions on borderline candidates (appended). It was decided that AR would ask Dorothy Lovett to examine how the change from Method B to Method A would have effected the degree classification of borderline candidates in 2006. Once this information is available the teaching committee will make a firm recommendation to the management team. This will be before Christmas. AR drew attention to the paragraph in the university guidelines on “mitigation”. It is clear that the role of the Special Circumstances Committee will be much more important if a decision is made to move to Method A.

ACTION: AR to ask Mrs Lovett to carry out analysis of 2006 results using Method A.

4. **Teaching Fellows.** The management structure and roles of the teaching fellows was discussed. The following was decided:
 - a. Jonathan Agger would report to Garry Procter. It was felt Jonathan could immediately take a greater role in laboratory organisation. REPW to speak to Chris Whitehead about Jonathan organising a second semester lab course in the measurement laboratory.

ACTION: REPW to speak to Prof Whitehead.

- b. Maria Limniou to report to Garry Procter and Tim Wallace. Two immediate tasks were identified: creation of a robust structure for electronic pre-lab exercises where the content would be provided by the laboratory organisers, and eventually where the lab organiser could enter the content directly. Secondly, to create a structure for on-line tests for 2nd year to allow them to monitor their own progress (see item 7).

ACTION: GP and TW to arrange a meeting with Dr Limniou.

5. **Plans for 2006-7 session.** Four issues were raised by REPW which need to be discussed further by the teaching sections before a full discussion at the teaching committee.
 - a. **Revision of the structure of 3rd year practical teaching for B.Sc. stream for next session.** There is an opinion that the one semester project pursued by B.Sc. students does not provide appropriate training for students who are unlikely to become professional chemists. Staff also have a low opinion of this teaching exercise. REPW will produce an outline proposal for a change in this area which will be circulated for discussion.

ACTION: REPW to produce an outline proposal.

- b. Increasing the content and difficulty of Year 3 and Year 4 lecture courses for next session.* The quality of our 1st and 2nd year undergraduates requires us to consider making our 3rd and 4th year courses more demanding in the future.

ACTION: SLH, AH and TW to begin discussion with teaching sections.

- c. Improving the practical course in years 1 – 3.* GP and Jonathan Agger will form a small working group to look at creating a cohesive, ambitious and challenging practical course across years 1, 2 and 3. Input from the teaching sections will be sought.

ACTION: GP to begin work on new practical course with Dr Agger.

- d. Modifying the lecture timetable to allow end of year examining in Years 3 and 4.* If we are to move from examining at Christmas for years 3 and 4 it is desirable to stop teaching at Easter (end of week 8). To achieve this several options need to be considered. These include: teaching in the examination period in January (which may disadvantage students doing Chemistry with... degrees); increasing the numbers of lecture per week; decreasing the number of lecture modules. The sectional representatives were encouraged to liaise with their sections to discover which of these options would be acceptable and to look for other alternatives (e.g. replacing lectures with set reading).

ACTION: SLH, AH and TW to begin discussion with teaching sections.

- 6. Laboratory appeal group.** GP has been asked to set up a laboratory appeal group. It needs a few more members. REPW will speak to heads of teaching section about populating this group.

ACTION: REPW to speak to Profs Faulkner, Thomas and Whitehead.

- 7. A. O. B.** TW raised concerns about lack of monitoring of 2nd year with the lack of Christmas examinations. It was felt that the department is monitoring students through their attendance and performance in laboratories, which is a demanding type of continuous assessment. The students would like feedback on their progress with lecture material. While this is largely provided by good attendance at tutorials, further assistance appeared to be desirable. Therefore it is proposed for TW to work with Dr Limniou to prepare a structure for on-line tests using Web-CT. The content for the tests – likely to be multiple choice – would then be provided by lecturing staff. Three tests are proposed: week 1 of semester two, on lecture material from semester one; week 5 of semester two on lecture material in weeks 1-4 of semester two; week 8 of semester two on lecture material in weeks 5-8 of semester two. If the structure of the Web-CT tests is well-defined the amount of staff time required should be minimal. The students will answer the questions in the test and will receive a mark for their performance. If their performance is poor they should then seek assistance from their tutor.

ACTION: TW to speak to Dr Limniou about creating a suitable Web-CT platform.

University Regulations on Degree Classification

35. The overall mark for a programme is a weighted average of the overall marks for different years of the programme. For the different classes the overall mark ranges shall be
- . for class 1, not less than 70.0%;
 - . for class 2i, less than 70.0% but not less than 60.0%;
 - . for class 2ii, less than 60.0% but not less than 50.0%;
 - . for class 3, less than 50.0% but not less than 40.0%.

For the different classes boundary zones shall be

- . for class 1, less than 70.0% but not less than 68.0%;
- . for class 2i, less than 60.0% but not less than 58.0%;
- . for class 2ii, less than 50.0% but not less than 48.0%;
- . for class 3, less than 40.0% but not less than 38.0%.

36. A student who obtains an overall mark in the range required for class 1, 2i or 2ii and obtains at least two-thirds of the credits for the final year with a mark not less than 40.0% shall be awarded that class of degree, and a student who obtains the overall mark in the range required for class 3 and obtains at least half of the credits for the final year with a mark not less than 40.0% shall be awarded that class of degree, save that any Faculty may decide to introduce more stringent requirements. Except as provided under Paragraph 37, a student who obtains an overall mark in the range for that class but obtains less than the specified fraction of the credits for the final year with a mark not less than 40.0% shall be awarded the next class lower, or for class 3 shall be considered under the criteria in Paragraph 38.

37. A student may be considered for the next higher class of degree than determined by Paragraph 36 by one of two methods approved for each programme by the relevant Faculty.

Method A, by mark distribution. A student who obtains an overall mark in the boundary zone for that class and obtains at least two-thirds of the credits for the final year with a mark not less than 40.0% shall obtain that class if at least two thirds of the credits for the final year are in or above the range required for that class.

Method B, by mark review. The relevant External Examiners shall review the marks, and may conduct an oral examination, of a student who either obtains an overall mark in the range required for a given class but does not obtain the fraction of the credits for the final year with a mark not less than 40.0% specified under Paragraph 36, or obtains an overall mark in the boundary zone for that class and obtains the fraction of the credits for the final year with a mark not less than 40.0% specified under Paragraph 36, and the External Examiners may then recommend that the student obtains that class.

38. The ordinary degree of Bachelor shall be awarded to a student who at the end of the honours programme obtains an overall mark not less than 40.0% averaged over final-year units totalling 60 credits and obtains at least half of those credits with a mark not less than 40.0%.

39. The ordinary degree of Bachelor shall be awarded to a student who at the end of the ordinary programme obtains an overall mark not less than 40.0% averaged over final-year units totalling 100 credits and obtains at least half of the credits with a mark not less than 40.0%.

40. A student who fulfils the requirements for the award of a degree may be reassessed in some units in the final year where that is necessary to achieve higher marks required by the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body, but the marks originally obtained shall stand.