

The University of Manchester

School of Chemistry

Teaching Committee

Minutes of Friday 27 November 2009

Present: Garry Procter (Chair), Steve Yeates, David Collison, Eric McInnes, Andrew Regan, Peter Gorry, Jim Thomas, Andrew Horn, Tim Wallace, Karen Charters (Secretary)

1) Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Joe McDouall and Frank Mair

2) Minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2009

The minutes were approved.

3) Matters Arising

The committee noted with regret the recent death of Phil Day.

- a) It was reported that the Curriculum Working Group now comprised Professors Procter, McInnes, Yeates and Dr Quayle. It had met once and had agreed to (a) review 1st year course content, (b) review CHEM20710, (c) look at embedding maths skills into years 1 and 2, (d) explore possibility of bringing some or all of teaching on MedChem degree in house and (e) review year 4 options with particular attention to low-recruiting Physical course units.
- b) *Received:* proposed University minimum attendance requirements. There was some objection to the statement that lectures were not compulsory. It was felt most strongly that any wording should make clear that students are expected to attend lectures.
- c) *Received:* call for volunteers for a University focus group on assessment and feedback. It was agreed that this call would be circulated to all colleagues.
(Action: Karen Charters)
- d) *Received:* draft of T&L submission for School plan. *Noted:* remove reference to all tutorial answers being published on Blackboard. Any comments suggestions to be sent to the Chair as soon as possible.

4) E-learning

Dan Jagger and Mark Jasper from Faculty e-learning were in attendance, explaining that they were visiting Schools in order to improve communications and gather information. Issues discussed included

- 1) the use of a lockdown browser and IP address filter in order to facilitate online examinations. It was advised that Respondus Lockdown Browser was the appropriate browser to use.
- 2) Available support for updating/creating interactive content requiring shockwave/flash. It was advised that Steve Davis in the e-learning team was the expert in this area.
- 3) Members were advised of some new training sessions covering use of Turnitin/Grademark and developing formative assessments in Blackboard. These would soon be advertised to all staff by email.
- 4) Exploring current online systems within Physics for recording and reporting student attendance. This would be investigated further by The Senior Education Officer, as it appeared to have been developed in-house.

5) Laboratories

Received: report from Dr Quayle on progress of online submission of lab scripts in the year 2 synthesis lab. It was reported that the experiment was so far successful, providing a) a much more robust system for tracking the students performance; b) a more reliable system for keeping track of students' work and c) the possibility for more efficient feedback to the students.

6) Examinations

Noted: both continuing external examiners (Dyke and Bochmann) had been very clear in their comments following the response to the 2008/9 reports that they wanted to see the issue regarding the use of the algorithm for automatic promotion addressed this year. It was agreed that this item would be discussed at a later meeting.

Action: David Collison/Karen Charters

7) Outreach

No business discussed under this item, though it was suggested that a full review of Outreach activities be discussed at Management Team.

8) Admissions and Recruitment

Noted: integration problems between UCAS and Campus Solutions are close to being resolved and decisions input into the system. Visit days are now taking place. It is too early in the cycle to get a good picture of application/acceptance trends.

9) Quality Assurance and Student Feedback

- a) *Received:* Staff-Student Liaison Committee minutes
Noted: not all staff are prepared to release full lecture notes onto Blackboard due to poor lecture attendance. Students should be made aware that there are consequences to not attending lectures and therefore not receiving full content.
Noted: a discussion took place regarding the lunchtime closure of year 3 labs. It was felt that staff rotas could be adjusted to ensure that there was cover during lunch, meaning that some students could remain working even if there were no demonstrators. It was agreed that the Chair would discuss this with the Year 3 S-lab organiser (David Berrisford)

Action: Garry Procter

- b) *Received:* feedback from 1st year focus group. It was agreed that the report be circulated to those members of staff linked to the issues raised, including Head of School.

Action: Karen Charters/Garry Procter

- c) *Received:* executive summary from National Student Forum

10) Attendance

Received: statistical update on attendance rates for labs and tutorials, including numbers of referrals to the Director of Teaching.

11) Sectional Issues

No business discussed under this item.

12) Any Other Business

- a) Maths provision for Undergraduates. The Head of Physical Teaching Section reported that a review of maths education was under way, the plan being to integrate maths into more Physical teaching in years 1 and 2. Further reports would come via the curriculum review group.

- b) It was noted that no information had been forthcoming with regards to the proposed new Taught MSc programme. The Chair agreed to remind the Director of Postgraduate Studies about this.

Action: Garry Procter