

Science Studies Committee
20 May 2014
12.15 The Boardroom, 58 Prince's Gate
South Kensington Campus

Minutes

Present: Professor R Thompson (Chair), Professor A Parry, Professor S Curry, Professor A MacKinnon, Professor J Mestel, Dr E Price-Davies, Miss N Kempston, Mr D Pateman, Professor A Spivey, Dr B Duncombe, Mr J Fernando, Dr S Archer, Miss Z Hsu

In Attendance: Miss K Coffield (Secretary), Mr D Surtees

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Received: Professor D Wright, Miss M de Souza

2 Minutes

2.1 Approved: Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 February 2014 (**Paper 1**).

3 Matters Arising

3.1 Noted: That the course proposals for the Horizons programme in 2014-15 are now approved (minute ref. 11 – 11.1).

3.2 Noted: That the deadline for submitting comments on the proposals to revisions to the periodic review process was extended to 16 May 2014 (minute ref. 15 – 15.1).

4 Senate Summary Report

4.1 Received and Noted: The summary report from the meeting of the Senate held on 26 February 2014 (**Paper 2**).

5 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee Summary Report

5.1 Received and Noted: The summary report of the meeting of the QAEC held on 16 January, 4 March and 1 April 2014 (**Paper 3**).

6 Engineering Studies Committee Summary Report

6.1 Received and Noted: The summary report of the meeting of the Engineering Studies Committee held on 12 March 2014 (**Paper 4**).

7 Medical Studies Committee Summary Report

7.1 Received and Noted: The summary report of the meeting of the Medical Studies Committee held on 12 February 2014 (**Paper 5**).

8 Distribution of Honours Data 2012-13

8.1 Received and noted: Distribution of Honours Degree Classifications 12-13 (**Paper 6**).

It was noted that the combined percentage of first and upper second class degrees awarded in the Faculty of Natural Sciences is just below 80%. This is significantly lower than the Faculties of Engineering and Medicine, as well as being below the overall College percentage.

The higher number of male students, compared to female students, achieving a first class degree was also noted. The Academic Registrar agreed to raise this as appropriate at the Vice-Provost's Advisory Board.

9 UG and PG SOLE Lecturer/Module Evaluation Questions for 2014-15

9.1 Noted: An update on the above from the Student Surveys & Feedback Working Party, with regards to the questions and scale used in the evaluations for 2014-15 (**Paper 7**).

10 Department of Physics

10.1 Received: Proposed changes to degree programmes in the Department of Physics (**Paper 8**)

10.2 Approved: Approval was given to the proposed amendments, to take effect from 2014-15, to correct anomalies in course weightings which have occurred following the introduction of ECTS credits.

10.3 Approved: Approval was given to the proposed plans to introduce a system in 2015-16 of long and short options with six and three ECTS credits respectively. For 2014-15 there will be no three ECTS options available and students on this programme will finish with 63 ECTS for the year, all weighted equally.

10.4 Approved: Approval was given to the proposed plans to cease to use *viva voce* examinations to decide on the degree class of candidates just below a borderline. Students with a weighted average, between 0.5% and 2.5% below a grade boundary, after any corrections for mitigating circumstances, will normally be recommended for promotion if more than half the weighted credits are in the higher class. Students within 0.5% of the boundary will be promoted automatically.

10.5 Noted: Introduction of three new courses for 2014-15 as follows:

Light & Matter, Physics of the Universe and Fluid Dynamics to replace *Atomic & Molecular Physics, Solid State Physics and Nuclear and Particle Physics*. These will be core courses for BSc & MSci Physics and BSc & MSci Physics with Theoretical Physics, and will be available as optional courses for third and fourth year MSci Year in Europe, BSc Physics & Music Performance and BSc and MSci Physics with Science Education.

10.6 Noted: The Committee noted that the outgoing DUGS for Physics would ask his successor to report back to the Committee on any issues identified with no choice question papers during this examination cycle.

11 Department of Mathematics

11.1 Received: Proposed changes to degree programmes in the Department of Mathematics (**Paper 9**)

11.2 Noted: Introduction of a new course, with effect from 2014-15, entitled *Econometric Theory and Methods*. The course will be counted as one of the two permitted non-maths options and will be an option for third and fourth year BSc/MSci students.

11.3 Noted: The *Advanced topics in Partial Differential Equations* course is to be split into two courses with effect from 2014-15. There will now be a new *Applied Functional Analysis* course and a modified *Advanced topics in Partial Differential Equations*. These courses apply to third and fourth year BSc/MSci and MSc students.

11.4 Approved: A request for clearer, defined guidelines for progression to year four of the four year MSci programme. The Department proposed that students averaging at least 580/1000 in their third year (or with suitable mitigating circumstances) would have the right to remain on the MSci. Those falling below this mark would proceed to year four at the discretion of the Board of Examiners. The Committee approved this in principle, on the understanding that the DUGS for Mathematics would further investigate the appropriate threshold figure and seek approval to change this under Chair's Action if necessary.

12. Department of Life Sciences

12.1 Noted: The introduction of a new course, with effect from 2014-15, entitled *Metabolic and Network Engineering* as an optional course for third year students in biochemistry and biology (**Paper 10**).

12.2 Noted: The Department's proposal for dealing with requests to allocate ECTS to UROP projects (**Paper 11**).

13 Dates of meetings for next session

Confirmed: The dates of the 2014-15 meetings of the Science Studies Committee:

Wednesday 5th November 2014, 12.15pm – 3pm, Drawing Room, 170 Queen's Gate.

Wednesday 18th February 2015, 12.15pm – 3pm, Boardroom, 58 Prince's Gate.

Wednesday 3rd June 2015, 12.15pm – 3pm, Boardroom, 58 Prince's Gate.

14 Any Other Business

14.1 The Department of Chemistry

14.2 Received: Proposed changes to degree programmes in the Department of Chemistry.

14.3 Considered: The introduction of three new courses as follows: *Chemistry with Medicinal Chemistry with Research Abroad*, *Chemistry with Molecular Physics with Research Abroad (4 years)* and *Chemistry with Molecular Physics with Research Abroad and a Year in Industry (5 years)*.

The Committee approved of the new courses in principle. However, full documentation would be required before full approval can be given. The DUGS for Chemistry will prepare this documentation and discuss the matter further with the Academic Registrar. The Committee agreed that the new courses can then be considered further, and approved if appropriate, through Chair's Action.

14.4 Noted: The Department's proposal to allow third year F100 Chemistry students the option to take one six ECTS non-chemistry course from Horizons or BPES programmes in place of six ECTS of elective chemistry options.

14.5 Noted: The Department's proposal to allow third year F1NF and FN11 Chemistry with Management and Chemistry with Management and a Year in Industry students the option to take one six ECTS non-chemistry course from Horizons in place of six ECTS of elective chemistry options.

14.6 Approved: The renaming of F1N2 Chemistry and Management (3 year programme) to "Chemical Sciences and Management" in order to distinguish it from the 4 and 5 year Chemistry and Management programmes, and the withdrawal of the 3 year programme for

direct applicants.

- 14.7** The Committee thanked the outgoing Chairman, Professor Richard Thompson, for his service.

K Coffield
22 May 2014