

BLCS/EPSRC Discussion and Committee Meeting

11:30 am to 2:30 pm, 17/01/06

Manchester University

Present: Goran Ungar, Nigel Mottram, Helen Gleeson, John Goodby, Avtar Matharu, Steve Cowling, Lindsey Weston – Associate Programme Manager, John Wand – Programme Manager, Materials Programme,

Apologies: Martin Bates, Tim Wilkinson, Andrew Cambridge

Background

This was a follow-up meeting between the Materials Programme Manager, John Wand and Associate Programme Manager, Lindsey Weston, to the meeting of the 22 March 2005 with the then Programme Manager Clare Hayter

At this meeting Dr Hayter presented data showing the success rate of liquid crystals related grants at EPSRC across all programmes for the past few years showing there was a clear drop in success rate from 2003.

1. The reason for the fall in success rates were discussed with a focus on the effect of referees reports, training and membership of the College and operation of the panel.

Now that the JES system is operating it was agreed that the:

Action 1 The BLCS committee would be receptive to being involved in an e-pilot study in moderating referees comments. Specifically, this would involve referees being party to comments on particular proposals made by other referees and offered the opportunity to modify their responses based on this using a secure area to hold the responses. (JW, HG)

Action 2 A mock panel be organised at the April 2006 BLCS meeting. (MB, SC, JG)

Action 3 A list of current members will be forwarded to Dr Wand. (TW)

2. There was discussion of the effects of large versus, small proposals and 'clumping' leading to rejection of good proposals. It was agreed that the time was appropriate for a responsive made bid led by JWG

Action JWG

3. A possible range of options for restructuring of the Materials and related panels was discussed but the extent of this process is not yet clear. The committee emphasised that they would wish to be clearly involved in any reorganisation, particularly with regard to the interdisciplinary and broad nature of applications of the subject.

Action JW, HG

4. It was agreed that Dr M Bates would produce a report of the recent Royal Society meeting 'New Directions in Liquid Crystal Science' for Spotlight. It was agreed that following this a working party would be set up to develop a Road map for liquid crystals. All members of the Committee were asked to prepare suitable copy for publication. Outlets for such publicity are to be considered at the next meeting.

Action MB, HG

Any Other Business – BLCS Only

1. Professor H Finkelman was nominated by JWG for the George Grey Medal and he spoke this proposal. It was unanimously supported by members present.
2. E mail reminders would be sent to all members regarding confirmation of attendance at the 20th BLCS conference in April. E mail reminders would also be sent about nominations for prizes and committee membership. The preparation is progressing well with the theme of celebration of twenty years since the Society was founded.