Present: Prof Andrej Atrens (Chair), Prof Mingxing Zhang, Prof Jeff Gates, Prof Rowan Truss, Mrs Jessica Shelley, Ms Kristin Greer, Scott Luengen, Michael Campbell, Benjamin Sartor, Sean Murphy, Lorenzo Mauro-Todd, Elise Ryan

1. Welcome from the Chair (Professor Andrej Atrens)

Welcome to all new and continuing Materials Engineering students in Semester 2, 2015. Hand out feedback forms for students to fill out.

2. Feedback and concerns about Materials Engineering courses at UQ

Those present were asked to provide feedback on Materials Engineering courses offered at The University of Queensland.

a. AERO3110 – Aero Design & Manufacturing

Students commented that this is the best course for structures and materials. Students noted that David Gildfind is a great lecturer and is well prepared and interesting. Students also commented that there is a good balance of material covered in this course, however, the material needs some more depth and coverage of aero dynamics.

b. MECH2305 – Intro Eng Design & Manuf.

Students commented that this is quite an intuitive course and if provides a good introduction for later courses, however, this course is not content heavy. Students noted that the CAD practical was good, however stronger links need to be made between the lecture and workshop content. For example, students mentioned that the CAD lectures on manufacturing were abstract and broad.

c. MECH3305 – Sci & Eng of Metals

Students commented that this is one of the best courses offered within Materials Engineering.

Practical

Students commented that the practicals have valuable content, including real time observations and application of techniques for Mg alloys. Students noted that the practicals can be too long, and they believe the marks, associated to the practical report, does not adequately reflect the effort or difficulty of the assessment item.

Lecture

Students commented that the lectures are content heavy. It was stated that the Crystal Structure content is delivered without sufficient guidance, which can result in confusion. It would be beneficial to have a 10 minute break, however it is noted that the lecture notes supplied are thorough and beneficial to the students.

Quiz

Students commented that the quizzes are beneficial to help the students keep up with course content. It was recommended that a focus question be provided at the start of each lecture, to assist to direct student learning during the lecture. The current format of the quiz was liked and the alignment with tutorial work is good.

d. ENGG1200 – Eng Modelling & Problem Solving

Students commented that it can be difficult for students and the tutors to keep track of the quizzes each week.

e. MECH 2300 – Structures & Materials

Students commented that this course has a broad introduction, which is helpful. The Chair raised concerns that students are not completing required readings for this course. Students suggested that self-directed learning is better adopted by students in later years of the degree, whereas lectures are move valuable in earlier courses.
f. CHEE4301 – Nano-materials & their characterisation
Students commented that the crystal structures material in CHEE4301 is quite difficult. The tutorial sheet provided is a good learning tool as it gets students to work through the questions without giving up marks, and is a more formative form of learning. With a pass/fail marking criteria it ensures the students think more about the questions. Students commented that the tutorials are well structured. However this course is considered by the students, as being too broad, and that too much time is spent familiarising a different topic each week (as there is a guest lecturer each week). Students noted that the course is not cohesive and is therefore difficult to study for. The pracs are useful however, the final exam is ‘messy’ as so many lecturers are involved in the course.

g. MECH4304 – Net Shape Manufacturing
Students commented that there is a good coverage of material in this course, and includes ‘hands-on’ pracs. Lecturers could be improved by having one 2 hour session.

3. Research Presentations
Academics presented an overview of their research area and potential thesis topics for 2016.

4. Other business
a. Study Abroad
The Chair noted that one student present had completed Study Abroad. The weighting system of marks was discussed. It was thought that grading in Canada was similar to that at UQ.

b. Lecture Attendance
The Chair noted that approximately 40% of students do not attend lectures or listen to lectopia recordings. Students were asked to provide feedback on what might drive a student to not engage with this component of a course. Students noted that lectures can simply be out of sight, out of mind, or in some cases, lecture slides provide a lot of content that is processed easier through reading. A student also noted that in some courses, information on the exam is orally communicated, therefore attendance of lectopia recordings are important.