ISIS Experimental Report Forms 2015 – Summary of Comments

What are experiment report forms and how are they used?

An experimental report is required for every full experiment performed at ISIS. Over recent years the number of reports received has declined, and so, around 18 months ago, the report form and report process were relaunched to emphasise the importance of reports to account for the use of ISIS time. Report forms are emailed to the experiment contact following completion of an experiment, and can also be downloaded from the ISIS website (see http://www.isis.stfc.ac.uk/apply-for-beamtime/experimental-reports4409.html).

ISIS Facility Access Panels make use of experimental reports, and are asked to take the presence or absence of a report into account when assessing continuation experiments. Report forms are read by ISIS staff, particularly to note any comments made in the 'Suggestions for improvements to your experiment, equipment or the facility' box. Statistics on reports received, including this document, are made available to the ISIS user community and bodies with oversight of the facility.

Reports received in the 2015 year

280 report forms were received in the 2015 calendar year, of which 206 were in the new report format which offers the opportunity to comment on facility improvements. The new form also asks for the likely outcome of the experiment e.g. a publication or a follow-up proposal. Of the 206 reports received in the new format in 2015, around 170 anticipated that the experiment would result in a publication, 92 of the experiments provided data for a PhD thesis, 137 were likely to result in a follow-up experiment at ISIS and 59 at another facility. Other experiment outputs noted included science highlight articles, improvements to experimental apparatus, conference presentations or grant applications.

Around 120 of the 206 reports on the new-style form had one or more comments in the 'Suggestions for improvements' field. Comments from individual experiment report forms have been fed to ISIS science and operational group leaders. Comments generally fell into a small number of categories; in particular:

- There were around 34 **positive comments**, about equipment, the instrument and about scientific and technical staff and the support they gave. These comments are very welcome as an encouragement to facility staff, and are much appreciated.
- Around 30 of the comments concerned **sample environment equipment** or **equipment available in support laboratories**. These varied from issues with the behaviour of low-temperature equipment, cool-down times and temperature stability, to comments on equipment used for sample preparation in ISIS chemistry labs or specific technical comments on more specialised equipment.
- **Capabilities of specific instruments** were noted, including counting times (desire for more flux) or resolution. **Detectors** were also commented on, with requests for new detectors for specific measurements, or generally improved coverage for faster data rates.

- Around 16 comments were made about **data analysis**, including availability of calibration data or neutron response data for specific equipment, speed of data processing, development of analysis software and more instrument scientist time available to help with data analysis.
- There were a variety of **experiment-specific comments**, e.g. improvements to user-supplied equipment. Ways of improving **samples** for future experiments were also noted in around 20 comments, including deuteration, sample size, fabrication of complex, multi-component samples, use of istopic substitution, use of single-phase samples, or sample cell improvements.
- **Beam stability issues** were noted in around 10 comments. **Accommodation, food or coffee** were commented on around 5 times. Finally, the **experiment report** form itself received around 6 comments, and we are making changes to improve its usability.

We are grateful for all comments received, which form part of the process of helping ISIS continue to improve and develop our facilities and capabilities.