

22nd February, 1961

NI/61/4

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN NUCLEAR SCIENCE

GOVERNING BOARD

UNIVERSITY REACTORS

Note by the Secretary

A copy is enclosed of a letter which has been prepared for sending to the Vice-Chancellors of all the United Kingdom Universities. I understand that the Treasury do not wish the recommendations to be announced until they have approved them: the letters have therefore not yet been posted.

Rutherford Laboratory,
Harwell.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN NUCLEAR SCIENCE,

Rutherford High Energy Laboratory,
Harwell, Didcot, Berks.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH,

Charles House, 5, Regent Street,
London S.W.1.

February, 1961.

Research Reactors for Universities

On the 29th March 1960, on the instructions of the Governing Body of the National Institute for Research in Nuclear Science, N.I.R.N.S. wrote to you, as to the Vice-Chancellors of all the other Universities in the United Kingdom, to enquire what you thought your requirements might be for research and training facilities on reactors. The replies which were received have been considered by NIRNS and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research jointly on behalf of H.M. Government. The requirements have been considered as far as possible from the broad national point of view in the light of the country's requirements for research and training in this field, and in the light of these and other demands on the available funds for providing research and training facilities.

After a very thorough consideration, the conclusion has been reached that it would be reasonable to make provision in the first instance for 3 reactors, to be placed in such a way as to make it as easy as possible for the greatest number of potential users to avail themselves of the facilities. One reactor will therefore be sited in the London area, one in the north-west (to be operated jointly by Liverpool and Manchester Universities), and one near Glasgow, to be operated by the Scottish Universities and the Royal College of Science and Technology, Glasgow. N.I.R.N.S. and D.S.I.R. are confident that the Universities to whom grants are being made for these reactors will do their utmost to ensure that other institutions in their areas who wish to make use of reactor facilities will be given the maximum opportunity to do so. When research facilities are as expensive as this, it will be appreciated that they can only be provided in very limited numbers, and then only on the understanding that they are shared in such a way as to ensure that they are put to the fullest and most effective use. If, therefore, you have a need for the use of a nuclear reactor we will be glad to discuss it with you and to advise you whether your needs can best be met by the facilities of Harwell, or one of the three University reactors which are being provided.

These three reactors are all that it is at present aimed to provide during the next three years, and it is intended that they should be installed and used before any decision is taken about adding to their number. Clearly

it will only be in the light of experience that it will be possible to say whether reactors are proving useful and whether these three reactors are sufficient or not. If, however, in the light of changed circumstances you should feel that your need for reactor facilities has grown during the next year or two to such an extent as to merit considering the provision of another reactor earlier than is at present expected, N.I.R.N.S. and D.S.I.R., will be glad to consider any case you would like to make, and to discuss it with you.

Yours sincerely,

J. A. V. Willis

National Institute for Research in Nuclear Science

W. L. Francis

Department of Scientific and Industrial Research