

**School of Mathematical Sciences  
Research Committee**

**Minutes from the Meeting held on 06 June 2017**

*Present: Mark Jerrum (Chair), Boris Khoruzhenko, Malwina Luczak, Jo Young, Reto Buzano, Christopher Joyner, Rainer Klages, Ivan Tomasic, Alexander Sodin, Dudley Stark, Pau Figueras.*

*Apologies: Ginestra Bianconi, John Moriarty.*

*Secretary: Elisa Piccaro.*

Minute	Summary of Agreed Actions	Who	When	Progress
06.06.2017- 8	Malwina to talk to David Lee about the three bids above, asking about Shahn's bid, and clarifying the third bid to avoid confusion. Also, Faculty should be convinced that the third bid is indeed worthwhile pursuing.	Malwina		

Agenda Item	Reports, Discussions and Actions	Who	When
1. Minutes from last meeting	Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2017 were approved.		
2. Matters arising	All actions were completed except for 27.02.2017-3 'HoGs to provide input to Malwina about aspirational journals.' This was discussed as part of agenda item 3.		
3. Aspirational journals	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> Malwina reported that HoGs did not send any material to her about this.</p> <p>Boris summarised that there has not been any progress on this in the last months. HoGs have not been engaging with this process, and it is hard to come to any agreement. The groups should have a clear idea of what they classify as aspirational but the list that was drawn in 2016 was too long, and therefore did not reflect the truly aspirational journals.</p> <p>Boris also mentioned that he looked at the SJR list and tried to draw a line. The feedback he received from Bill Jackson was that it seemed to be a good list.</p> <p>Sasha mentioned that the AMS have a list and that can be used. Obviously then the academics who publish in physics journals could be adopting a similar list for their own research area.</p> <p>Rainer suggested having a list on the website and ask the academics to take a survey to judge the list. The final list would be an average resulting from the academics' input.</p> <p>Boris mentioned that this exercise had already been done in 2012. However, looking at the REF14 results, the list delivers 3* and 4*</p>		

	<p>papers, which is not what an aspirational list should aim at. The list should aim high.</p> <p>Pau suggested that the groups could be asked to revise the list they submitted and shorten them.</p> <p>Boris said that there is no set length as long as the quality is high.</p> <p>Mark added that some groups simply listed the journals they publish in, which is not the aim of this exercise.</p> <p>Rainer stressed the importance of having a list aimed at the REF, and one which should be used for promotions.</p> <p>Malwina commented that the School has other indicators for promotions.</p>		
<p>4. Research Manager Report</p>	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> The Research Manager highlighted what she included in the report, with particular emphasis on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open Access: The School is doing well as a whole and academics are engaging with Elisa to make sure their records on Elements are compliant. One record is not complaint at the moment.</li> <li>- Research Enabling Fund. HoGs were asked to remind academics in their group to spend their funds before 31 July 2017.</li> <li>- Research Grants Management System (RGMS) Phase 1 (Applications) is now live in the Faculty of Science and Engineering. The product is known as Worktribe. From now on all grant applications will be costed, submitted and approved using the Worktribe system. The post-award side of the system will be implemented in the next year or so.</li> </ul> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open Access: Ivan reported that he has come across one of his records which has been duplicated. Elisa explained that this and all other Open Access/Elements related queries can be passed to her. She will be able to delete duplicate records, and assist more in general with compliance. The responsibility of the academic is to either record the information of any accepted papers on Elements within 90 days of the paper been accepted, or to liaise with her so that she can do it on the academic's behalf.</li> <li>- 2016/17 submitted and awarded grants: Rainer asked for clarification about the amount of grant applications still pending award. Elisa explained that although we are almost at the end of 2016/17 financial year, many grants were submitted later in the year, and still pending. Elisa also reminded academics that they should inform her if a grant is or isn't awarded. There is no other way she can know about it otherwise.</li> </ul>		
<p>5. Update about the annual research review</p>	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> Boris gave a summary of the pdf he circulated ahead of the Research Committee meeting, titled '<i>RC Paper 4_5 REF2 dry run debrief and strategy for academic appointments 2 June 2017</i>'. He asked the committee to comments and open a discussion on this.</p> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b> Ivan asked how as a School we can improve in the</p>		

	<p>ranking, given that the other Institutions won't probably be doing worse than before.</p> <p>Boris commented that future appointments may help, or not depending on the portability of output and more in general we need to see how the Stern recommendations will be implemented if at all. He also stressed that our priority is to publish 4* papers.</p> <p>Reto asked to clarify what date counts for the REF inclusion. This is because in his research area sometimes it takes years between acceptance and publication.</p> <p>Mark replied saying that there was nothing mentioned in the Stern review about this, and that therefore it is likely to remain the online publication date.</p> <p>Ivan added that we could still submit unpublished papers.</p> <p>Boris commented that this would be rather risky and that only a very small number of unpublished papers were submitted in REF14.</p>		
<p>6. Staff recruitment strategy and academic vacancies</p>	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> Boris gave a summary of the pdf he circulated ahead of the Research Committee meeting, titled '<i>RC Paper 4_5 REF2 dry run debrief and strategy for academic appointments 2 June 2017</i>'. He added that by the end of the summer the School needs to have a recruitment strategy. He will also take views from HoSAG and from the entire School in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Mark added that with the new Principal starting soon we may have periods when we will not be able to hire. So it is important to have a clear plan now.</p> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b></p> <p><b>Statistics.</b></p> <p>Pau suggested to appoint a Ligo data analysis person that could also help attracting funding. Also the person would also help with the statistics teaching. Furthermore, this would reinforce the attempt to apply for an STFC rolling grant. Moreover, it would help having interdisciplinary research, which is part of the School's strategy.</p> <p>Malwina commented that they would not publish in statistics journals. She would prefer to hire a statistician. A physicist with statistics knowledge and statisticians are different roles.</p> <p>Rainer pointed out that there were attempts of appoint statisticians in the past years and that we were not successful in doing so.</p> <p>Boris commented that it is indeed challenging to recruit in statistics. However, we teach 6 or 7 statistics modules and we would like more people to be able to do so.</p> <p>Pau added that physicists with statistics experience can teach statistics to UG students.</p> <p>Boris added that the School has appointed two new statisticians but one will start in one year's time.</p> <p>Sasha suggested that we should wait for the new academic starting in October to arrive and then advertise. It will make it easier to attract good candidates.</p> <p>Reto pointed out that these are two separate issues: to form a statistics group and to find academic staff able/willing to teach statistics modules.</p>		

	<p>Ivan asked whether can could reduce the number of statistics modules. Boris shared Sasha's view to wait until the new academic Silvia Liverani will start in October and then re-consider this appointment.</p> <p><b>Combinatorics.</b> Mark suggested that we could consider appointing in Combinatorics. This is because there are two senior academics, who will probably retire soon, and if we are to face a long period with no appointments, then we may think about appointing to those positions now. Boris asked whether they would like to appoint in pure combinatorics or in broader areas. The last appointment was in 2011.</p> <p><b>Algebra.</b> Ivan suggested to advertise broadly for this so that areas of algebraic number theory, algebraic combinatorics could be covered. He also agreed to invite people who applied before to re-apply when we will advertise. Sasha said that the School made two good appointments so perhaps we should wait another year before appointing again in this area. Unless we are concerned in some budget freezing in which case we may want to appoint sooner. Boris commented that we simply do not know. This is an opportunity for people with algebraic number theory or combinatorics number theory background to apply.</p> <p><b>Classical analysis.</b> Sasha explained that this has been a quiet area in the UK, and especially in England, while the top departments in the US have classical analysts of all generations. However, there is now increasing interest driven by recent results that make progress on open problems. Also, we perhaps have the possibility to hire from groups disintegrating elsewhere. Boris commented that we will have to know the details of what expertise we need or we will end up having applications from geometry analysts.</p> <p><b>Applied.</b> Rainer suggested that we should hire people that can generate impact as we will need more impact cases for the next REF. So we need to hire with this in mind. Boris commented that we still do not know if the Stern recommendations will be taken into account or what the rules of the next REF will be. Mark added that appointing for impact 2020 is late. But we need to think beyond 2020. Rainer added that we also need critical mass in some areas (going back with what Pau proposed earlier). Life Science Institute is also something to keep in mind. Boris said that specific research areas do not necessarily guarantee a</p>		
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	<p>REF impact. Also, we need to think beyond 2020 impact. New appointments should be encouraged to go out and talk to people in the Life Science Institute and similar groups.</p> <p><b>Other.</b> Boris concluded saying that a similar discussion will also take place at the next HoSAG. He will then write to the entire School inviting comments. The plan is to converge to a plan in June/July.</p>		
7. Impact	This item was not discussed because John could not attend.		
8. Possible bid for DTC in 2018	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> Mark reported that we submitted three ideas to Faculty in April. Today 6 June 2016 the School received the feedback.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Analysis (with KCL). The School feels that there is lack of leadership for this bid. However, the Faculty gave really positive feedback as they probably thought that Sasha would be the PI. Faculty would like to support this. Mark commented that EPSRC already supports three similar DTCs.</li> <li>2) Shahn's bid proposal. Mark reported that Faculty did not give any feedback on this. It was submitted after the deadline but perhaps excluded for this reason? Mark feels that this proposal also lacks leadership just like the previous one.</li> <li>3) Combinatorics, Optimisation and Games, in collaboration with LSE. Faculty was negative about this one, especially as EECS has one DTC transferred to QMUL soon. The committee thinks that perhaps the Faculty has misunderstood what is meant by 'Games' in this bid.</li> </ol> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b> It was asked why Michael Farber's idea was not submitted. Mark explained that in fact the idea did not materialise in a bid.</p> <p><b>ACTION -8:</b> Malwina to talk to David Lee about the three bids above, asking about Shahn's bid, and clarifying the third bid to avoid confusion. Also, Faculty should be convinced that the third bid is indeed worthwhile pursuing.</p>	<b>Malwina</b>	
9. School colloquium	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> Mark asked the Committee for feedback whether the Colloquium is a worthwhile activity that should still happen in the coming year or not. The concern is attendance. Also, except for the Geometry and Analysis group, Mark did not receive proposals for speakers.</p> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b> Ivan thinks that the colloquium should still be organised as this is one of the activities that brings the Schools together. It was discussed whether the time of the colloquium could be changed to allow academics to leave at</p>		

	<p>a reasonable time should they need to. Boris proposed to arrange the Colloquium to run on Wednesday afternoon at 2pm. Ivan pointed out that the number theorists (two academics) would not be able to attend on Wednesday afternoon.</p> <p>Sasha proposed to have the colloquium on a weekly basis. Reto commented that it should not be a weekly event. The main reason is that attendance will be poor. Also, probably not possible to find so many top speakers. He thinks that the way it is scheduled at the moment works.</p> <p>It was agreed that the colloquium will carry on for the next year, perhaps organised on Wednesday afternoon.</p>		
<p>10. Date of next meeting and AOB</p>	<p>Dates for the next Research Committee meetings will be agreed and circulated in the next month or so.</p>		