

**School of Mathematical Sciences  
Research Committee  
Notes and Actions from Meeting held on 08 October 2019**

*Present: Christian Beck (CB), Matt Fayers (MF), Kathrin Glau(KG), Sasha Gnedin (SG), Bill Jackson (BJ), Mark Jerrum (MJ) (Chair) (DoR), Boris Khoruzhenko (BK), Vito Latora (VL), Steve Lester (SL), John Moriarty (JM), Rodrigo Panosso Macedo (RPM), Abhishek Saha (AS) (DDoR), Juan Valiente-Kroon (JVK).*

*Apologies: Alex Fink (AF).*

*Secretary: Elisa Piccaro (EP) (RM).*

Minute	Summary of Agreed Actions	Who	When	Progress
Action 08.10.19 – 4i	BK and MJ to discuss whether the authors should have the ability to point out when one or more papers need to be revisited (with evidence) and how.	BK and MJ	Before dry run starts	
Action 08.10.19 – 5i	MJ to email HoGs and collect their views.	Chair	Before next RC meeting	
Action 08.10.19 – 7i	The Chair will think of broad questions that can be discussed at the next research committee in relation to the research strategy in the School.	Chair	Before next RC meeting	
Action 08.10.19 – 7ii	Add the following item to the next RC meeting agenda 'Future Direction for the School'.	RM	Before next RC meeting	
Action 08.10.19 – 7iii	Invite a statistician to the next RC.	Chair	Before next RC meeting	
Action 08.10.19 – 8i	HoGs to report on possible pipeline impact case studies at the next research committee meeting.	HoGs	Next RC meeting	
Action 08.10.19 – 10i	RM to send the Research Grants update to the Research Committee.	RM	ASAP	

Agenda Item	Reports and Actions	Who	When
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2019	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> The minutes from the meeting held on 26 June 2019 were approved.</p>		
2. Matters arising	<p><b>REPORTED:</b></p> <p><b>Action 26.06.19 – 2i Chair to make the list of journals the School has subscribed to available to the Committee.</b> The list was sent on 5 July 2019.</p> <p><b>Action 26.06.19 – 2ii Update the committee about research webpage improvements.</b> The Marketing and Communication central QMUL team will work on this but has labelled these improvements as not urgent, so it will take time. EP will be chasing since Emily Pickett has now left the School.</p> <p><b>Action 26.06.19 – 3i Discuss APC charges at the next Research Committee meeting.</b> This is in the agenda for today’s meeting.</p> <p><b>Action 26.06.19 – 3ii Ask the library for an update about the way the block grant is allocated across QMUL.</b> For this year Queen Mary each Faculty have the freedom to have their own process for allocating the funds and avoid spending it within the first few months. S&amp;E has decided not to change the process since last year, so they are operating a first come first serve basis, so nothing has changed. They are planning on reviewing the budget every few months.</p> <p><b>Action 26.06.19 – 3iii Aspirational journals review deadline is the 15 July. HoGs are asked to reach out to individuals in their group that are singled out (maths biology, financial maths, topology).</b> Aspirational Journals will be discussed in today’s meeting.</p> <p><b>Action 26.06.19 – 4 The RC would like to have a simple stats for output to know how many 4*, 3*, 2* we have in the School.</b> BK will also cover this in his presentation. There are two ways of giving a stats. We can either look at all outputs submitted to the dry runs in the past or at the set of papers that has been optimised as a possible submission. When looking at all papers submitted we had: 1% Unclassified, 10% 2*, 64% 3* and 25% 4*. This looks as an improvement since last REF. When looking at the sub-categories, we found that the mode of our data is at 3*Medium.</p>		

	<p><b>Action 26.06.19 – 7 Postpone PGR recruitment agenda item to the next RC meeting.</b> PGR recruitment will be discussed in today’s meeting.</p> <p><b>Action 26.06.19 – 8 The RM will share information and internal process for the Simons Foundation call with the HoGs.</b> The information was sent to the committee on 28 June 2019.</p>		
3. PGR admissions	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> SL attended the meeting in AF’s absence to report on this year’s PGR recruitment. We made 33 offers this year and 19 students enrolled. The students that rejected our offer went to Cambridge and similar institutions. Nothing we could have done better.</p> <p>It was reported that this year the admissions tutors’ role will be slightly different. There will be 4 tutors and they will be involved in the interview process, perhaps sitting on all or most interviews. This is so that they will be more knowledgeable in the allocation meeting. This does not apply to grant funded studentships, only the College, SMS and EPSRC studentships.</p> <p>As we already did in previous years we will make more offers than places, so that the rejects won’t affect the final allocation of funding and enrolment.</p> <p>Special attention will have to be put on EPSRC studentships allocation as they can only be allocated to UK students. HoGs should provide a different shortlist of EPSRC eligible students.</p>		
4. REF update	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> The Chair reported that the dry run timetable this year starts earlier but we may have more outputs to evaluate after the end of the dry run in the last months before the final submission.</p> <p>BK showed a presentation about Queen Mary’s performance so far in dry runs and SMS performance too. He pointed out that this second REF has different rules and the final result is hard to predict. He also commented that other maths departments have strong impact case studies (i.e., Liverpool). As for outputs we have to submit over 100 of them, so a small change in judgement won’t make a huge difference. However, with only five impact case studies a small change in score will make a big difference.</p> <p>S&amp;E is confident about the scores in SMS. In other Schools they have been more critical and suspicious but not in SMS.</p>		

	<p>In the last dry run we required 147 outputs (based on the FTEs) and Queen Mary has an optimisation tool in place. The view in S&amp;E is that we should optimise purely based on rating. However, the REF guidance points out to more criteria such as fair representation of the UoA, EDI criteria, etc.</p> <p>The calibration of outputs will be the focus of this year's dry run to get the optimal submission ready.</p> <p>BK pointed out that now that the School has grown considerably we have an increased weight in S&amp;E and Queen Mary's submission.</p> <p><b>Action 08.10.19 – 4i: BK and MJ to discuss whether the authors should have the ability to point out when one or more papers need to be revisited (with evidence) and how.</b></p> <p>Impact. BK reported that we are in good shape with impact case studies and this year we need to work on enhancing the narratives and collecting evidence. Based on the FTE to be submitted, we need five impact case studies. Two of them are new cases that have not been assessed before (authors Juan Valiente Kroon and Lucas Lacasa).</p> <p>Environment. BK reported that this year we need to concentrate on this to include all the good things the School is improving on, such as research income, PGR numbers, and the overall expansion.</p>	BK and MJ	Before dry run starts
5. Open Access and APC charges	<p><b>REPORTED:</b></p> <p>The Chair reported that financial support for open access fees is only available if you are UKRI funded. This does not include Article Processing Charges (APC). Some authors are not funded or not UKRI funded. Moreover, some journals ask for APC to be paid.</p> <p>The Chairs asked the committee their view on whether we need to have a pot of money in the School for the APC. What should be covered with this allowance? We should prioritise high quality journals, how? Or perhaps we should simply ask people to publish elsewhere?</p> <p><b>Action 08.10.19 – 5i: MJ to email HoGs and collect their views.</b></p>	Chair	Before next RC meeting
6. Aspirational Journals	<p><b>REPORTED:</b></p> <p>The Chair gave a summary of feedback on the topic of aspirational journals received from HoGs in responses to the recent consultation exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible gender bias in aspirational journals. There is statistical evidence that the proportion of female authors in articles in top-ranked journals is lower than that for journals in general.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several aspirational physics journals have high APCs. This makes them inaccessible to authors in those areas who do not have a source of funding.</li> <li>• Some Research Groups have access to specialist aspirational journals but not all.</li> <li>• The use of a list of aspirational journals is inconsistent with DORA (Declaration on Research Assessment).</li> <li>• Not all major mathematicians feel bound to publish in aspirational journals.</li> <li>• Many respondents asked for particular journals in their area to be included.</li> <li>• It was requested that the list should be considered "sufficient but not necessary".</li> <li>• There was detailed criticism of the methodology, e.g., journals with a small number of published papers per year were excluded.</li> </ul>		
7. Role of RC	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> The HoS reported that whereas the Teaching Committee usually make decisions, the Research Committee does not, and therefore the HoS or SMT takes the research decisions instead.</p> <p>Themes that the Research Committee should discuss and decide on are for instance: appointments, research strategy, research initiatives.</p> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b> Appointments: some HoGs feel that it may not be productive to take decisions at the RC, as whatever decision is made, SMT may not take it into account.</p> <p>It was not clear what decisions the RC should be making, and what should be discussed.</p> <p><b>Action 08.10.19 – 7i: The Chair will think of broad questions that can be discussed at the next research committee in relation to the research strategy in the School.</b></p> <p><b>Action 08.10.19 – 7ii: Add the following item to the next RC meeting agenda ‘Future Direction for the School.</b> The Committee should share opinions about whether the School should be increasing the strength in pure maths and whether this would be a safe choice. Do we need to diversify further?</p>	<p><b>Chair</b></p> <p><b>RM</b></p>	<p><b>Before next RC meeting</b></p> <p><b>Before next RC meeting</b></p>

	<b>Action 08.10.19 – 7iii: Invite a statistician to the next RC.</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Before next RC meeting</b>
8. Impact	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> Continuing from the previous agenda item, JM commented that he would like to hear from HoGs about impact from the groups.</p> <p>He also updated the committee about the School having five impact case studies that are being prepared for the REF submission, and that we also have a reserve case. In recent years we had 16 questionnaires completed by academics about possible impact cases, and that therefore we can assume that only 1 in 3 usually converts into strong case studies. Also, of the 5 cases we have at the moment, 3 won't be able to be submitted again at the next REF. Therefore the School needs to generate at least another 3 (or 9 in the pipeline).</p> <p>HoGs are reminded that talking about impact at annual appraisals is important.</p> <p><b>Action 08.10.19 – 8i: HoGs to report on possible pipeline impact case studies at the next research committee meeting.</b></p> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b> JVK commented that we could also look at the PhD allocation to incentivise the impact based on the projects proposed as some have industrial partners that are prepared to invest time on the project.</p> <p>BK added that it would be good to have a list of colleagues in the School that are interested in doing impact work. There are often opportunities in AI for instance and we need to be prepared to point researchers towards these opportunities.</p> <p>BK also added that impact is as important as research grants income.</p>	HoGs	Next RC meeting
9. School Colloquium	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> The Chair reported that the first School Colloquium of this year (now happening in core hours on Wednesday afternoon at 3PM) was poorly attended with only 10 – 12 people in the room. He would like to understand from the committee whether the Colloquium should still be organised and how this could be made more appealing to researchers.</p> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b> The Committee thinks that perhaps moving the colloquium to a Wednesday afternoon maximises availability but not attendance, with many academics choosing this day to prioritise other duties. It could also be that this was early in the year and perhaps not many people were back.</p>		

	<p>The Chair will be monitoring the attendance at the October colloquium, which has already been organised, with the hope to see more people there.</p>		
<p>10. Any other business</p>	<p><b>REPORTED:</b> The Chair updated the committee on the grant awards and pipeline so far in 2019/20. The School is applying for more research funding, and we have been awarded various grants, some of which from the Alan Turing Institute.</p> <p><b>Action 08.10.19 – 10i RM to send the Research Grants update to the Research Committee.</b></p> <p><b>REPORTED:</b> SG reported that the writing pads on the chairs in the seminar room are not very comfortable, and they are inconvenient for people attending with laptops. Also, it was pointed out that none of the writing pads are left handed.</p> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b> Most RC agreed that it would be preferable to have tables instead of the writing pad. BK commented that the chairs were chosen to maximise capacity in the room and that there are no funds to change this arrangement and layout.</p> <p><b>REPORTED:</b> SG asked whether the funding available to the groups to organise seminars would increase this year from the £2000 allocation per group.</p> <p><b>DISCUSSED:</b> BK said that the School does not have access to extra funding this year and therefore to be able to increase the seminar funding one should be thinking of other areas where the School could make a saving. For instance we could be using part of the Research Enabling Fund to increase seminar funds.</p>	<p><b>RM</b></p>	<p><b>ASAP</b></p>
<p>11. Date of next meeting</p>	<p>The next Research Committee meeting will be on <b>03 December 2019.</b></p>		