

**School of Mathematical Sciences
Research Committee
Notes and Actions from Meeting held on 13 April 2021**

Present: Christian Beck (CB), Alex Clark (AC), Alex Fink (AF), Sasha Gnedin (SG), Mark Jerrum (MJ – Chair & DoR), Robert Johnson (RJ), Vito Latora (VL), Silvia Liverani (SL), Juan Valiente-Kroon (JVK), Linus Wunderlich (LW)

In attendance: Charlie Ellis, Senior Partnerships Manager, Global Innovation Partners team.

Apologies: Kathrin Glau (KG), John Moriarty (JM), Abhishek Saha (AS - DDoR)

Secretary: Elisa Piccaro (EP)

Minute	Summary of Agreed Actions	Who	When	Progress
Action 13.04.21 – 1	AC to liaise with other Heads about the recruitment of female PhD students in other maths schools/departments.	AC	ASAP	
Action 13.04.21 – 2	Members of the committee to send their thoughts regarding the decrease in number of PhD female applicants.	Everyone	ASAP	
Action 16.02.21 – 9	Identify an LMS representative within the School	AC	ASAP	
Action 13.10.20 – 4	EP to liaise with JM on publication of ICS on QM Plus as example.	JM/EP	Dec 20 / Jan 21	On hold
Action 13.10.20 – 6	ML & KG to work on creating questionnaire/database for industry contacts & collaborations	KG/ML	ASAP	On hold
Action 14.01.20 – 7iii	KG and the RC to develop and agree on a detailed policy around industry engagement to present to SMT for final approval/discussion.	KG	Next RC meeting	On hold

Agenda Item	Reports and Actions	Who	When
1. Minutes from the previous meeting	Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted.		
2. Matters arising	Actions and matters arising: Action 16.02.21 – 9 AC reported that there was a call for volunteers and we should be able to identify someone soon.		

<p>3. Introducing the Global Innovation Partners team in Queen Mary Innovation (Charlie Ellis)</p>	<p>Charlie Ellis showed a presentation in relation to the activities supported by him and his team within the Global Innovation Partners team at QM. He shows collaborations that researchers in Maths have (based on grant applications). His team is available to support researchers in applying for funding in collaboration with USA, Asia and ODA recipient countries.</p> <p>He will update us regarding an EPSRC visit to QM to present the EPSRC-NSF funding scheme. He is aware that here in SMS we already have one project funded by the scheme.</p> <p>The slides presented will be circulated to the Committee with the minutes.</p>		
<p>4. Update from the Chair: - REF - Grant News - Research Associate Funding</p>	<p><u>REF</u> QM returned a REF submission on 31 March 2021, but we had another call for data last week, now looking at identifying ECRs in the list of submitted staff. This exercise will end on 21 April and that will be the end of the submission.</p> <p><u>Grant News</u> There was one successful STFC Ernest Rutherford Fellowship proposal in the School. The fellow will join in September.</p> <p><u>Research Associate Funding</u> The positions were advertised and a panel has been organised, with dates for interviews. The School returned its statement of intent in relation to the additional Research Associate funding from EPSRC. We have not heard back from EPSRC about this, and until they confirm we can go ahead, the HR team will not be able to give RAs their contracts.</p>		
<p>5. Flexible Research Fund Changes & Supporting Research at School Level</p>	<p>The background to this was already presented at the Research Committee in February 2021. The new Flexible Research Fund (FRF) has replaced the current Faculty Research Support Structure which consists of a 10% enabling fund to PIs as well as the opportunity to apply to the central Faculty Research Support Fund for a PhD studentship or a PDRA to support their research projects. Instead, all grants applied for and awarded after 1 August 2020 will receive a Flexible Research Fund amounting to 20% of the overheads of the grant for PIs. The Research Support Fund going forward will only be open to NIA Awards or similar, or other 'special circumstances'. A request will have to be made to Yang Hao. In some circumstances the Faculty may negotiate to award a studentship and keep the FRF awarded. The decision rests with the PI of the grant.</p>		

	<p>Like the Research Enabling Fund, the FRF would be subject to the same expenditure requirements and money cannot be transferred between financial years.</p> <p>The Committee is in favour of supporting studentships with the funds from the FRF (or part of it) that can be donated by PIs on an annual basis. However, given that the funds are donated by the PI on a voluntary basis, it may not give stability and availability to the School on a continuous basis. In SMS we don't have grants large enough to attract enough FRF for one single grant to support a studentship, so it will have to be a team effort in any case.</p>		
<p>6. Policy on supporting parallel grant applications</p>	<p>The Chair reported that we recently had two cases in the school which arose when PIs applied for two full time fellowships. In general the problem arises when the allocated PI time sums to more than 100%.</p> <p>We learnt that funding bodies do not like this and want to persuade us from doing it. Should the School have a policy that prevents this in future applications?</p> <p>With UKRI, you can apply twice only if the two proposals are distinct. This is the requirement, but how can one devote 100% FTE to two distinct proposals?</p> <p>The Royal Society say that they cannot stop us applying to other funding bodies at the same time, which suggests we should not.</p> <p>The feedback on this from the HoGs was that many other institutions do it, and it is regarded as common practice. So if we introduce such restriction in SMS we may lose competition. Also, the likelihood of getting funding is so low that to have real chance to be successful, one needs to apply to multiple funding streams at the same time.</p> <p>However, the committee also agreed that if offered two grants/fellowships for over 100% FTE, the PI should reject one of the two.</p> <p>MJ clarified that in the recent situations in the School, we had the more important/superior fellowship coming after the PI had already accepted an offer for the other one. And this is why we had problems.</p> <p>JVK commented that if the PI accepts the fellowship that is less important, then the other one should be withdrawn.</p> <p>LW commented that PDRAs rely on the ability to apply to more than one funding call, as their appointments are temporary, and this may be the only way to have less temporal gap between funding/jobs.</p> <p>The Committee agreed with the PDRA point of view. Multiple applications need to be supported for them.</p> <p>EP added that while we may decide to give support to only one proposal for one potential fellow, the fellow may be submitting other proposals with different institutions, before or after.</p>		

	<p>The Committee agreed that the School should not support multiple submissions to a single funding body for one PI. In case more than one offer is made the PI should decide which funding to accept and reject the other from.</p>		
<p>7. EDI analysis (PGR recruitment and seminar speakers 2019/20)</p>	<p><u>Seminar data</u>: SL reported that we will be able to add the 2020/21 data to the spreadsheet in June, once all seminar series will stop for the year. The EDI committee has agreed to include the seminar data in the action to be taken before the next Athena Swan application. The aim would be to increase the percentage of women speakers and this is now only 20%. The spreadsheet will be shared with next year's seminar organisers, so that they can plan accordingly when contacting new speakers.</p> <p>CB commented that the School Colloquium has been a problem for years, with no female speakers again last year.</p> <p>MJ explained that aside from the 2019/20 being the pandemic year, with many seminars cancelled, the established researchers' ratio of women is low (below 10%). It is therefore a challenge to increase the percentage of female speakers for this series.</p> <p><u>PGR numbers</u>: SL and AF explained that this is also an action for the Athena Swan application and a priority for the School.</p> <p>The low number of female applicants and female students recruited may be due to the pandemic, brexit and other unknowns. The EDI committee looked at data from other Schools at QM, and found that there was not a problem and we had the biggest drop. In fact some of the other schools even increased their percentage of female students. The EDI committee does not have information about other maths schools across the country.</p> <p>ACTION: AC to liaise with other Heads about the recruitment of female PhD students in other maths schools/departments.</p> <p>ACTION: Members of the committee to send their thoughts regarding the decrease in number of PhD female applicants.</p>	<p>AC</p> <p>Everyone</p>	<p>ASAP</p> <p>ASAP</p>
<p>8. PDRA Update</p>	<p>LW reported that he ran a short poll with other PDRAs in the School to catch their issues. The main problems PDRAs seem to have are structural, such as their short contracts and long term security. There is a common desire for short term funding to bridge between jobs. LW had the opportunity to have this funding for a few months when he arrived and he found it extremely helpful. PDRAs think that it would be good to have some funding available in the School on a rolling basis. He commented that the RA positions funded by the EPSRC are great for</p>		

	<p>PhD students at the end of their studies, and they would welcome a similar opportunity.</p> <p>LW also reported that PDRAs may find funding opportunities for smaller pots of money easier to secure. These could be for instance funding through the impact fund or S&E schemes. Smaller pots are easier to get and would be beneficial for their CV and job applications.</p> <p>LW concluded that the PDRAs are aware that their requests above are costly and that the School and University are not in a position to spend much money at the moment.</p> <p>MJ commented that the proposal to use the FRF towards studentships could be extended to PDRAs, to have some available funds to help them bridge between jobs.</p>		
9. Any other business	None.		
10. Date of the next meeting	The next meeting is currently scheduled on 22 June 2021, 14:00 – 16:00.		