

**School of Mathematical Sciences
Research Committee
Notes and Actions from Meeting held on 26 June 2019**

Present: Christian Beck (CB), Ginestra Bianconi (GB), Matt Fayers (MF), Mark Jerrum (MJ) (Chair) (DoR), Bill Jackson (BJ), Boris Khoruzhenko (BK), Abhishek Saha (AS) (DDoR), Juan Valiente-Kroon (JVK).

Apologies: Sasha Gnedin (SG), Xin Li (XL), John Moriarty (JM), Rodrigo Panosso Macedo (RPM), Jo Young (JY).

Secretary: Elisa Piccaro (EP) (RM).

| Minute | Summary of Agreed Actions | Who | When | Progress |
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| 26.06.19 – 2i | Action 26.06.19 – 2: Chair to make the list of journals the School has subscribed to available to the Committee. | Chair | ASAP | Done 05/07/2019 |
| 26.06.19 – 2ii | Update the committee about research webpage improvements. | RM | ASAP | |
| 26.06.19 – 3i | Discuss APC charges at the next Research Committee meeting. | RM | Next RC | |
| 26.06.19 – 3ii | Ask the library for an update about the way the block grant is allocated across QMUL. | RM | ASAP | |
| 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). | HoGs | 15 July | |
| 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. | Chair | ASAP | |
| 26.06.19 – 7 | Postpone PGR recruitment agenda item to the next RC meeting. | RM | ASAP | |
| 26.06.19 – 8 | The RM will share information and internal process for the Simons Foundation call with the HoGs. | RM | ASAP | Done 28/06/2019 |

| Agenda Item | Reports and Actions | Who | When |
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| 1. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2019 | <p>REPORTED: The minutes from the meeting held on 26 February 2019 were approved.</p> | | |
| 2. Matters arising | <p>REPORTED: Action 26.02.19 – 4i. The Chair will feedback to the library requesting more flexibility in the budget between books and journals. Action 26.02.19 – 4ii. The Chair will liaise with JY about the possibility of using underspent books budget on journals. The School has managed to accommodate both teaching and research needs, so we now have subscription to all the journals in the wish list (we do not have access to past issues). Before renewing these subscriptions we should revise the list (in about one year’s time). The funds cannot be used to pay APC. Action 26.06.19 – 2i: Chair to make the list available to the Committee.</p> <p>Action 26.02.19 – 6 and Action 26.02.19 – 7 Information has been made available on the QMplus intranet page.</p> <p>Action 26.02.19 – 9i and Action 26.02.19 – 9ii No recent update from Emily Pickett on this. Action 26.06.19 – 2ii Update the committee about research webpage improvements.</p> | <p>Chair</p> <p>RM</p> | <p>ASAP</p> <p>ASAP</p> |
| 3. Aspirational journals | <p>REPORTED: The Research Committee has discussed a list of aspirational journals on various occasions. The DORA (Declaration on Research Assessment) general guidance state that:</p> <p><i>‘For institutions</i></p> <p><i>4. Be explicit about the criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, clearly highlighting, especially for early-stage investigators, that the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.</i></p> <p><i>5. For the purposes of research assessment, consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets and software) in addition to research publications, and consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.’</i> (Extracted from https://sfdora.org/read/)</p> <p>However, academics in panels on occasions will need to rely on the journal</p> | | |

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| | <p>where the paper is published, although this is not ideal.</p> <p>The Committee discussed two main aspect of having a list of aspirational journals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How should the list be used? 2) What journals should be on the list? <p>DISCUSSED:</p> <p>On point 1) the committee agreed that the list should be used only for promotions, advancement without having a minimum standard. Also, the view is that the list should be only part of the academic assessment.</p> <p>The HoS explained that promotions are out of School control as the meeting comprises S&E HoSs and the Deans. The discussions are robust and grant income plays a role. Having a list of aspirational journal would favour SMS especially the academics applying to senior lecturer positions.</p> <p>CB commented that HoGs should be consulted about promotions, as these are complex cases and should be suited to each individual. He did not think that a list of aspirational journals would be appropriate to use in promotions.</p> <p>GB added that impact factors should be taken into account when compiling a list of aspirational journals, and she does not see an argument for excluding some journals with same or higher impact factors than others in the list.</p> <p>HoS explained that a review of physics journals to include should also be carried out, as we would expect a Mathematical Sciences School to have a list of aspirational journals with mathematics journals. If the research groups in Complex Systems and Network (CSN) and Dynamical Systems and Statistical Physics (DSSP) is comparable to the one in a Physics schools, then the groups should be open to have other indicators to be as important as journals (the most important of which would be research income).</p> <p>HoS added that the list should be used to also inform the School when APC charges should be covered by the School, i.e., when the output is published in a journal from the list of aspirational journals.</p> <p>Action 26.06.19 – 3i. APC charges should be discussed at the next Research Committee meeting.</p> <p>Action 26.06.19 – 3ii. Ask the library for an update about the way the block grant is allocated across QMUL.</p> <p>On point 2) The committee acknowledged that the list sent to the HoGs is algorithmic. However, this should be facilitating academics looking at the</p> | <p>RM</p> <p>RM</p> | <p>Next RC</p> <p>ASAP</p> |
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| | <p>list and the School deciding whether there are aspirational journals missing from it that should be added.</p> <p>BJ raised the concern that if the algorithm chosen excludes areas of research that are present and strong in the School that is not a good indicator to be used.</p> <p>Some committee members had ideas about making a list based on other tools.</p> <p>BJ proposed to look at MathsSciNet – MCQ. HoS thinks that this would not work for the DSSP and CSN groups.</p> <p>AS commented that there are problems with MCQ. For instance the citation counts is a problem as it varies across disciplines. AS proposed to look closely at the 'Article influence'. This is another factor which is comparable to the impact factor but it is weighed by other factors. We could make a more composite list using this and other factors. When trying to compile a list for the Algebra and Number Theory (A&NT) AS thinks that the results are more reliable. He proposed to try this approach for the other groups to check whether the list would be more reliable for others too.</p> <p>JVK commented that although his group is diverse and the list rather narrow, the proposed list seems adequate to his research group.</p> <p>The committee discussed the possibility of adding one journal to their own part of the list. The Chair argued that there should be an overall view on this.</p> <p>The HoS added that there is no pressure from Faculty about having such a list, other Schools have other indicators. Also, we should not expect academics to publish regularly on these aspirational journals.</p> <p>Overall 5 research groups do not agree with the list (DSSP, A&NT, CSN, Combinatorics, Statistics).</p> <p>CB argued that for DSSP and CSN they could abandon the list of aspirational journals. HoS agreed, but warned the groups that other indicators will have to be taken into account such as the grant income.</p> <p>Action 26.06.19 – 3iii. 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).</p> <p>HoS expressed the concern that if a list isn't agreed then the School management will use their personal view and this may not be fair and</p> | <p>HoGs</p> | <p>15 July</p> |
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| | <p>transparent.</p> <p>The Chair summarised the discussion points:</p> <p>1) The concept of having a list that could be used for promotions should be encouraged (with exception perhaps for DSSP and CSN).</p> <p>2) There are concerns with the realisation of the list. AS has a proposal for an improved list.</p> | | |
| 4. REF update | <p>REPORTED:</p> <p>Dissemination. The Chair reported that the Schools had instructions from Senate and we are asked to prove individual scores and not comments, but HoS could provide verbal context for these scores if academics want.</p> <p>The Chair also added that QMUL optimises what outputs will be submitted, also taking into account the Code of Practice, the fair representation and the panel membership. However, we believe that we will have a final say in the fine tuning.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Impact case studies. The School should improve and we are struggling to submit 5 strong cases. We may be asked to withdraw a strong impact case study, but this is out of School control at the moment.</p> | Chair | ASAP |
| 5. Pre-award: sharing successful proposals with external candidates | <p>REPORTED:</p> <p>The Deputy Director of Research AS reported that at the moment the School policy is to share successful proposals with applicants. However, we do not cover the case where the applicant may be an external candidate for a fellowship or similar. Should the policy include sharing successful proposals with external candidates?</p> <p>DISCUSSED:</p> <p>The Committee agreed that if the SMS support is strong, and we are confident that the candidate is serious about applying for external funding to join SMS then we should share successful proposals with them.</p> | | |
| 6. REF impact | <p>REPORTED:</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Impact Lead in the School JM has asked to be present to the Research Committee meetings only on occasions when required.</p> <p>JM sent a list of items to be shared with the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The School's impact case studies have now been assessed in the REF dry run and feedback (without scores) has been provided to the impact case | | |

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| | <p>holders;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is Impact Acceleration Account funding available to accelerate the impact of EPSRC/STFC funded research: Large Grants Competition (up to £25k), Flexible Innovation Starter Fund (up to £5k); - The Faculty has recently started organising impact advice drop-in sessions and training on writing Pathways to Impact documents; - Academics who think their research is generating REF impact should talk to JM in the first instance <p>DISCUSSED:</p> <p>CB and JVK agreed that it would be extremely important to have the views of the Impact Lead in the School on all aspects discussed in the meeting, not just REF impact.</p> <p>HoS added that the role of the impact lead at the moment is to encourage REF impact case studies. Within this remit he agrees that he should be attending every Committee meeting. However, we need to start thinking about the strategy for industry connection, industry income. Therefore from a strategy point of view we should have someone within the School encouraging industrial links. That person should also join the RC.</p> | | |
| 7. PGR recruitment | <p>REPORTED:</p> <p>There seems to be a problem in the School to translate offers into acceptances. This will be discussed at the next RC when the PGR director will be present.</p> <p>Action 26.06.19 – 7. Postpone this item to the next RC meeting.</p> | RM | Next RC |
| 8. Any other business | <p>HoS advertised two opportunities to the HoGs. One is from the Simons Foundation, the other is the Royal Society Research Professorships.</p> <p>The Royal Society Research Professorships call has already been advertised within the School.</p> <p>Action 26.06.19 – 8. The RM will share information and internal process for the Simons Foundation call with the HoGs.</p> <p>HoS reported also that Faculty asked HoSs in SPA and SMS to look at possible outputs to be referred to UoA9. This will be done in July.</p> | RM | ASAP |
| 9. Date of next meeting | <p>The date of the next meeting will be announced in the coming weeks. The meeting on the 16 July is cancelled.</p> | | |

