

School of Mathematical Sciences
Research Committee
Notes and Actions from Meeting held on 27/02/2018

Present: Mark Jerrum (MJ) (Chair), Pau Figueras (PF), Felix Fischer (FF), Chris Joyner (CJ), Boris Khoruzhenko (BK), Sasha Sodin (SS), Ivan Tomasic (IT), Franco Vivaldi (FV), Jo Young (JY)

Apologies: Ginestra Bianconi (GB), John Moriarty (JM)

Secretary: Elisa Piccaro (EP)

Minute	Summary of Agreed Actions	Who	When	Progress
27.02.18 – 1	Near miss scheme. Proposal to be discussed at the next SEG in March.	Chair and RM	SEG mid-March	
27.02.18 – 2	Reviewers' comments. Finalise a list of recommendations.	Chair and RM	Before the next research committee meeting	
27.02.18 – 3	Liaise with the library about journal subscriptions to try to subscribe to the missing journals.	Chair	Before the next research committee meeting	
27.02.18 – 4	Meet the M&C officer and discuss how to best organise the research groups' pages, taking into account the suggestions made by the committee.	Chair and RM	ASAP after the M&C officer starts	

Agenda Item	Reports and Actions	Who	When
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 07 November 2017	REPORTED: The minutes from the meeting held on 07 November 2017 were approved.		

<p>2. Matters Arising</p>	<p>REPORTED:</p> <p>Action 07.11.17-2 Aspirational journals. The Chair has received no suggestions in the past months.</p> <p>Actions 07.11.17-4-1, -4-2, -4-3, -4-4 REF dry run updates will be given under item 4 of the meeting.</p> <p>Actions 07.11.17-5-1 Near miss scheme. The Chair reported that this has still to be discussed in SEG as in the last months SEG did not meet as often and when it did there were more urgent matters to be discussed.</p> <p>Actions 07.11.17-5-2 Reviewers' comments (on grant applications). The Chair reported that this action is ongoing. The comments have been collected but not fully analysed yet.</p> <p>Actions 07.11.17-8-1 EPSRC CDT call for proposals. The Chair reported that back in November there were two proposals. One in combinatorics (QMUL leading with LSE as partners), and one in algebra with QMUL leading and City as partner institution. At School level the algebra one was not supported. This was a decision made to have better chances with the combinatorics one. However, given that QMUL can only submit four proposals to the EPSRC, College decided that the combinatorics proposal was not strong enough and will not be submitted as QM leading. LSE was then going to lead on the combinatorics one. But LSE is now also accepting another proposals, to be submitted for a final decision on Friday 2 March. So it may be that the combinatorics one will be submitted by LSE, or it may be that it will not be submitted at all. City is now leading the algebra proposal with QM as partner institution.</p> <p>DISCUSSED:</p> <p>Action 07.11.17-2 BK reported that just recently the probation objectives were discussed at a faculty meeting. Within these objectives are the publications. Some schools base their judgement of these on the journal impact factor. Other schools do not have a clear metrics on how to judge publications. It would be good to work out objectives indicators. The Chair commented that impact factors are appealing but some journals are not scored well, and so this way of judging outputs is not terribly convincing. SS reported that the General Assembly of the IMU produced a document where they are critical of the use of bibliometric evaluations.</p> <p>Actions 07.11.17-5-1 PF said that other EU countries have similar schemes to re-award near miss ERC proposals. The Chair and BK commented that this scheme would be good for the School and it has the general approval in principle. However, the School's budget is tight for the coming year. FV specified that the award that the University of Western Australia was roughly £10k travel budget subject on the PI re-submitting the proposal. BK suggested to bring the details of the proposal to SEG on 14 March. The committee agreed that for some funders it may not be possible identify near miss proposals, but for EPSRC you can see the rank list on the web. Moreover for ERC the near miss could be to score A or to be invited to interview in Brussels, for the MSCA the mark and threshold could also give indication of how the proposal ranked.</p> <p>Actions 07.11.17-8-1 The Chair and BK believe that the reason for rejecting the combinatorics proposal internally at QM was not related to the School's EPSRC income. BK added that probably they believed that the industrial support was lacking.</p> <p>IT commented that we could argue that as this bid cannot attract much industrial support, the need for studentships funded by EPSRC is greater</p>		
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	<p>than in other Schools where industrial input is greater and easier to achieve.</p> <p>FV added that other he is aware of CDT programmes at other universities which are much more varied and not so specialised like the ones that we propose. Could such a broader programme be more welcome?</p> <p>ACTION – 1: Near miss scheme. Proposal to be discussed at the next SEG in March.</p> <p>ACTION – 2: Reviewers' comments. Finalise a list of recommendations.</p>	<p>Chair and RM</p> <p>Chair and RM</p>	<p>SEG mid-March</p> <p>Before the next research committee meeting</p>
3. Revised process about unconfirmed grants	<p>REPORTED:</p> <p>The Chair summarised the new process of research recruitment on unconfirmed grants, explaining that the faculty will underwrite the cost so that HR/JRMO/School will be able to initiate the process on iGrasp. However, no final appointment will be able to be made until the actual budget has been awarded to the PI and JRMO issues the HoD note. The committee understand that this can help in most cases but that potentially could mean running a recruitment campaign and then not be able to go ahead with the appointment.</p>		
4. REF dry run update	<p>REPORTED:</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone involved with the dry run 2018 submission and gave an update about the timeline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outputs are now with the external assessors. - In the past months academics and HoGs have scored all new submitted outputs (and not the ones already scored last year). - Outputs will be scored by HoS and DoR in mid-March and a final review will happen at the beginning of April when the scores from the external assessors are returned. - Impact cases were also submitted to external assessors. - The Impact lead JM, DoR and the SM will score the impact case studies in mid-March and a final review will happen at the beginning of April when the scores from the external assessors are returned. - The environment statement is now being scored by the external assessors. - Final submission to College will be on Friday 13 April. 		
5. Library journal subscription	<p>REPORTED:</p> <p>The Chair reported that during the REF dry run exercise it became evident that perhaps the School should review the library journal subscription as academics pointed out highly ranked journals in their field that QM does not subscribe to. So far HoGs have provided a list of journals missing from</p>		

	<p>the library subscription. Probability, Statistics and Algebra seem to be the research areas most affected. The Chair liaised with the library about it but the person that DoR needs to meet to discuss this matter was not available for 2 weeks. The meeting will be arranged in the coming weeks and DoR will send a list to them and check what is possible to subscribe to in the future.</p> <p>The Chair added that he also learnt that money can be diverted from books to journals. If this will be confirmed then the School could decide to use the books' budget to pay for the subscriptions (details to be finalised if applicable).</p> <p>DISCUSSED:</p> <p>SS commented that we should ask the library to show us the bundle deal for Springer and Elsevier before they renew the subscription. He added that this sort of issues may impact us in the REF (research environment) as a measure of facilities that the Institution should be able to provide. The committee does not believe that this would necessarily be the case as the REF panels will not be aware of these kind of details. The Chair commented that the library subscription has overall improved considerably compared to ten years ago or so.</p> <p>ACTION – 3: Liaise with the library about journal subscriptions to try to subscribe to the missing journals.</p>	Chair	Before the next research committee meeting
6. Research Webpages	<p>REPORTED:</p> <p>The Chair gave a brief summary about the need to look at the research pages now that the T4 platform is in place, and to review how the School should present the information within. He commented that it would be appreciated to have some consistency across the groups' pages .</p> <p>DISCUSSED:</p> <p>SS reported that he experiences problems with this platform and the browsers he uses to make changes. He was asked to send details of the difficulties encountered to the RM for her to look into with the T4 team. FF wondered whether we could have the groups' members to automatically appear under the research group that they are part of. The RM and JY believe that this is not possible.</p> <p>FV commented that to be able to make a decision about how to structure the pages and how much maintenance they would need, we would need to know how much support the groups will have from the professional services team.</p> <p>JY responded that the Marketing and Communication Officer will join the School soon (interviews will be ongoing w/c 5 March 2018).</p> <p>FF and the rest of the committee agreed that the M&C officer's role would be of great importance to help achieve the groups' vision about the structure of the research pages.</p>		

	<p>It was agreed that the Chair and RM will meet the M&C officer and get some ideas about how the pages can be pitched given that the main audience are external academics and PhD applicants.</p> <p>The committee members raised some important aspects related to the webpages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The feed from Elements does not look very professional. The RM commented that a review is ongoing with the Elements team and T4 team to improve the list of publications. - The Chair asked if we could have a blog like page with live announcements about workshops, etc. The RM and JY commented that there may not be scope within T4 for such a structure. - IT commented that pictures should be added on the research pages, and accompanied by some text. - There was an agreement about the fact that the Statistics page looks nice and professional and that perhaps we could follow a similar structure. - PF added that having consistent headings about basic information will make the webpages look more professional. The committee agreed. - Maintaining the webpages is a problem. - Academics profile pages sometimes are lacking of information. JY commented that an email will go out this week to remind staff to edit their profile pages and add the important information of their role in the School. - The main Research page will be also be looked at and conversations are already ongoing to add pictures related to the various research groups on this page. <p>ACTION – 4: Meet the M&C officer and discuss how to best organise the research groups’ pages, taking into account the suggestions made by the committee.</p>	Chair and RM	ASAP after the M&C officer starts
7. Impact	<p>REPORTED: The Chair reminded the committee that the School needs impact cases and academics should talk to the impact lead or RM if they think that their research is making an impact that we can use/develop for the REF.</p> <p>DISCUSSED: SS asked whether outreach activities are eligible to be returned to the REF as an impact case. The Chair and RM advised that we do not have final guidelines on this aspect of the submission but that if the outreach activity is in line with the requirement of the REF impact (is based on underpinning research published at QMUL and a clear outcome can be evidenced) then we can include it in the submission. In these activities often it is difficult to link the underpinning research.</p>		
8. Research Manager’s report	<p>REPORTED: The Research Manager highlighted what she included in the report that was circulated, including a reminder about the ResearchFish submission due by 8 March 2018.</p>		

	<p>DISCUSSED</p> <p>IT asked what would happen if a REF submitted paper is under embargo, in terms of accessing the paper and be judged by the panel. The Chair commented that the paper will be still evaluated by the REF panel and not be treated differently.</p> <p>BK added that sometimes even getting the published version of the papers can be a problem, for instance if QMUL does not have a subscription to the journal in question. He commented that in these cases the School may need to buy the paper.</p>		
<p>9. Date of next meeting and AOB</p>	<p>The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 13 June 2pm – 4pm, Room E304.</p> <p>AOB</p> <p>The Chair thanked Chris Joyner for his support given to the Research Committee as postdoc rep in the last years. The Chair is now campaigning for a new PDRA/PDRF rep.</p>		