

**School of Mathematical Sciences**  
**Research Committee**  
**Notes and Actions from Meeting held on 16 February 2021**

*Present: Christian Beck (CB) Alex Clark (AC), Alex Fink (AF), Kathrin Glau (KG), Sasha Gnedin (SG), Mark Jerrum (MJ – Chair & DoR), Robert Johnson (RJ), Vito Latora (VL), Abhishek Saha (AS - DDoR), Juan Valiente-Kroon (JVK), Linus Wunderlich (LW)*

*Apologies: John Moriarty (JM)*

*Secretary: Megan Liddle (RM)*

Minute	Summary of Agreed Actions	Who	When	Progress
<b>Action 16.02.21 – 3</b>	ML/AS to circulate updated pre-award process in the School	<b>AS/ ML</b>	<b>ASAP</b>	Completed
<b>Action 16.02.21 – 6</b>	MJ to revive internal colloquium	<b>MJ</b>	<b>ASAP</b>	Completed
<b>Action 16.02.21 – 7</b>	SL/AF to explore reason for low number of female applicants and actions to improve before next PhD round of advertising/interviews	<b>SL/ AF</b>	<b>ASAP</b>	
<b>Action 16.02.21 – 9</b>	ML/EP to liaise with AC regarding issuing a call for LMS representative.			
<b>Action 13.10.20 – 3</b>	MJ to consult with HoGs on scoring and adding of new outputs to final REF return	<b>MJ</b>	<b>ASAP</b>	Completed
<b>Action 13.10.20 – 4</b>	ML to liaise with JM on publication of ICS on QM Plus as example.	<b>JM/ ML</b>	<b>Dec 20 / Jan 21</b>	
<b>Action 13.10.20 – 6</b>	ML & KG to work on creating questionnaire/database for industry contacts & collaborations	<b>KG/ ML</b>	<b>ASAP</b>	On hold
<b>Action 17.03.20 – 6</b>	MJ to seek further input from HoGs on environment statement.	<b>MJ</b>	<b>ASAP</b>	Completed
<b>Action 14.01.20 – 7iii</b>	KG and the RC to develop and agree on a detailed policy around industry engagement to present to SMT for final approval/discussion.	<b>KG</b>	<b>Next RC meeting</b>	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:		

	<p><b>13.10.20 – 4:</b> Publications of Impact Case Studies – ML/EP will look at resuming with JM in March.</p> <p>One Web Phase 3 project is ongoing, with academics currently being asked to update their profiles. No further notable updates.</p>		
<p>3. Revised Pre-Award Process</p>	<p>Following implementation of a new pre-award process in 2018, the School has seen a good increase in grant income. In addition to PI efforts, a thorough pre-award process contributes to this. AS reported a survey was run in November/December. The overall response indicated this works well and the majority of staff appreciate the support but the process, particularly peer reviews, is considered a bit onerous by some. AS presented a revised process to the committee, proposing the following minor changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requirement for peer reviews (currently 2 for grants over £50k) relaxed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 1 peer review for grants between £50k and £100k.</li> <li>➤ 1 peer review for fellowship applications by external applicants which have a PI at Queen Mary (e.g. MSCA)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- No formal peer review forms required, feedback can be given in any form but peer reviewers encouraged to look at assessment criteria of relevant call.</li> <li>- The process document has been shortened</li> <li>- Timelines adjusted slightly</li> <li>- Clarifications on the availability of the Research Support Fund and calls to which demand management applies have.</li> </ul> <p>Committee commented positively on the level of support available, and welcomed the proposed changes.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> ML/AS to circulate updated pre-award process in the School.</p>	<p>ML/AS</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>4. Update from the Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- REF</li> <li>- Grant News</li> <li>- Research Associate Funding</li> </ul>	<p><u>REF</u></p> <p>MJ reported that all impact cases had been approved and final versions were now being reviews by the University’s REF Strategy Group. MJ thanked staff for additional outputs submitted after the last dry run in November/December, some of which were reviewed and included in the final output selection. All selected outputs have now been uploaded to Elements.</p> <p>The final version if the Environment Statement was submitted on Monday 15/02/21 and will now also be reviewed by the REF Strategy Group.</p> <p><u>Grant News</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shahn Majid and Xiao Han were successful in their application for an MSCA Fellowship.</li> </ul>		

	<p>- JVK and Jaroslaw Kopinski scored very high in the same round and are 4<sup>th</sup> on the reserve list for and MSCA award.</p> <p><u>Research Associate Funding</u>  The School returned its statement of intent in relation to the additional Research Associate funding from EPSRC. It is envisaged that 4 or 5 appointments will be made this year, and remainder will apply in the summer and with starting dates after 01/10/2021.  Positions will have a duration between 6-12 months, but the School has opted for a default to 6 months. If take up is low, then either longer or additional positions may be considered.</p> <p>ML stated that the exact process for applying will be circulated shortly as the School is working with HR on final approvals. In the meantime a notice informing the School of these positions will be circulated shortly.</p>		
<p>5. Flexible Research Fund Changes &amp; Supporting Research at School Level</p>	<p>MJ reported that the new Flexible Research Fund (FRF) was replacing 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 Support 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'.</p> <p>It was raised that it is often difficult for PIs to spend their allocated research enabling fund and it was queried whether PIs should be asked to contribute some of their future FRF to a School central fund which may allow us to fund PhD studentships or other research activities that can no longer be funded by the Faculty.</p> <p>ML emphasised that the FRF would be subject to the same expenditure requirements and money cannot be transferred between financial years. She also it would take some time for grant income to increase as current Research Enabling Funds would continue until the end of the grants which are already running.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>There were no objections to the idea of staff being asked to contribute some of their FRF to a centrally managed School fund, provided it was clear this was optional.</p> <p>AC queried whether the FRF would be allocated in arrears. ML believed this not to be the case, but will check with the Faculty Research Manager.</p>		

	<p>LW queried if FRFs could be shared with PDRA's. ML stated any future applications need to agree from the outset how the FRF will be divided if there are multiple Co-Is. Unless a PDRA is a named Co-I, they would not be assigned a FRF specifically but it would be expected the PI would use their FRF to further their PDRA's research.</p> <p>AF queried whether unspent funds could be returned to the School at the end of the year. ML confirmed no money can be carried over to the next financial year – with some notice alternative expenditure can be usually found, but it would be better to plan expenditure.</p>		
<p>6. Communicating Research within the School</p>	<p>In this item, proposed by RJ, he stated that prior to covid, the School ran a relatively well attended internal colloquium. This helped keep colleagues informed of research going on in the School and was also a good opportunity for informally meeting colleagues and good for morale. There were no objections to re-instating the staff internal colloquium.</p> <p>With regards to the wider School Colloquium, the decision was taken to pause this during covid due to the significant amount of online competition.</p> <p><b>Action</b> MJ to re-start internal colloquium.</p>	<p>MJ</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>7. PGR Funding Update - Additional Funding for Mathematical Sciences DTP – School's Statement of Intent - BAME Studentship Applications</p>	<p><u>Additional Funding for Mathematical Sciences DTP – School's Statement of Intent</u> AF reported that the School was required to submit a detailed statement of intent to EPSRC to ensure the additional award was made. It was emphasised this was additional funding (rather than replacement for the existing DTP). The Sol was shared with the RC.</p> <p>AF reported that in total the PGR allocation committee plan to make total of 8 DTP offers. The newly allocated funding contained some opportunities for flexible allocation such as: - 50% flexibility on nationality - 0.5 studentships - undergraduate vacation internships</p> <p>AF stated the School was exploring the process of 'vacation studentships' for the summer of 2022 and confirmed that appointments to such need not be our own undergraduates.</p> <p>A further EDI consideration was the potential to increase stipend amounts for lower socio-economic candidates where the costs would otherwise be prohibitive.</p> <p><u>BAME Studentship Applications</u> No candidates put forward for the BAME Studentships in this round, and AF asked HoGs to consider why. In some cases HoGs reported that there were no suitable candidates who met the criteria, but in general the applications process also means it's sometimes impossible to know</p>		

	<p>who would qualify. The guidance was also published late and could have resulted in candidates not being aware of this opportunity. This will be better highlighted next year.</p> <p>SL also raised that there was a general drop in applications, but also a very notable drop in applications from female candidates from 30% to 31 % average from the previous year. Only 1 female candidate was being considered in this year's allocation committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why general drop in applications?</li> <li>- Why female applicants dropped, and why none shortlisted?</li> </ul> <p>It was perceived that application numbers for PGR studies were also down at other universities but HoGs were asked to consider any contribution factors and how to address these.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> SL/AF to explore reason for low number of female applicants and actions to improve before next PhD round of advertising/interviews.</p>	SL/AF	ASAP
8. PDRA Update	<p>LW reported he had asked his peer group for feedback and no specific issues were raised.</p> <p>From his own experience, he stated that he applied for the EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowship and this was well supported.</p> <p>LW also reported that he took part in one of the Professional Development courses led by Researcher Development about "Leadership in Action", and stated good opportunities for professional development were available for the PDRA community.</p> <p>LW also reported that he had been accepted as a member of the UKRI Early Career Forum.</p> <p>Going forward, LW reported he plans to narrow the approach to obtaining feedback from PDRAs to enhance constructive feedback.</p>		
9. Any other business	<p>AC raised that there was no current LMS representative in the School, and asked the RC to consider whether there are any other such organisations where we do not have representatives. A call will be circulated to all staff asking for someone to volunteer.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> ML/EP to liaise with AC regarding issuing a call for LMS representative.</p>	ML/EP	ASAP
10. Date of the next meeting	The next meeting is currently scheduled on 13 April 2021 from 14:00 – 16:00.		