

**School of Mathematical Sciences
Research Committee
Notes and Actions from Meeting held on 19 April 2022**

Present: Christian Beck (CB), Alex Clark (AC), Pau Figueras (PF), Alex Fink (AF), Sasha Gnedin (SG), Robert Johnson (RJ), Vito Latora (VL), Abhishek Saha (AS, DDoR), Juan Valiente-Kroon (JVK, Chair, DoR).

Apologies: Kathrin Glau (KG), Silvia Liverani (SL), John Moriarty (JM), Elisa Piccaro (EP).

Secretary: The meeting was recorded as Elisa could not attend it.

Minute	Summary of Agreed Actions	Who	When	Progress
Action 19.04.22 – 1	HoGs should let AF and the Chair know if they have further concerns about PGR studentships and how the current climate is affecting their group.	HoGs	ASAP	
Action 19.04.22 – 2	HoGs to remind their group members that the FRF process has started and they can use this avenue whenever needed.	HoGs	ASAP	
Action 19.04.22 – 3	HoG to liaise with the PDRAs in their group to check whether someone is willing to be part of the Research Committee.	HoGs	By the next RC meeting	
Action 19.04.22 – 4	HoGs to flag any funding request for PhD students to be used by the end of July.	HoGs	In this financial year	

Agenda Item	Reports and Actions	Who	When
1. Minutes from the previous meeting	Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted.		
2. Matters arising	<p>Actions and matters arising:</p> <p>Action 15.02.22 – 1 – Thanks for providing input.</p> <p>Action 15.02.22 – 2 – In progress. We had some volunteers.</p> <p>Action 15.02.22 – 3 – Ongoing reminder.</p> <p>Action 15.02.22 – 4 – This will be discussed later in an update.</p>		

	<p>The REF outcome is approaching in mid May, but we will wait for the end of the embargo period. REF celebration on 18 May. We hope that we will have good news for SMS and QM.</p>		
<p>3. Update from the Chair</p>	<p>New Grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NIA Shu Sasaki – Actually this has not been awarded, the award was referred to a previous application to the EPSRC. We hope to be able to receive an award for Shu soon. - LMS small grant for Juan Valiente Kroon. - Probably more but they will be in EP’s report that will be sent with the minutes. <p>The Chair also reminded everyone that there are often small grants with the funders that we should be applying for.</p>		
<p>4. Research grant submission culture at SMS</p>	<p>The Chair would like to start a discussion about ways that we can improve the SMS number of grant submitted to the funders?</p> <p>Faculty has started this discussion, and we have been already sent lists of academics and whether they have been applying for grants and securing funding. A traffic light system has been implemented.</p> <p>Securing grants is outside of our control of course, but we can improve the number of grants we submit, especially for academics who do not submit proposals.</p> <p>The Chair shared Faculty targets for all Schools for Income/FTE per year. This is based on some benchmarking exercise they did and also on our QM plan targets as per strategy 2030.</p> <p>PF pointed out that the Faculty should share the criteria they use to draw the numbers in the table shown.</p> <p>The Chair showed another table with some information of our position with respect of all Russell Group universities, and where they would like SMS to place in the coming year by increasing the grant income we have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is this achievable? - Is there enough funding around for us to really take this large increase in research income? <p>Certainly many people do engage with proposal writing and are not yet being awarded, but there are also colleagues who are not applying and should start doing so. This would help academics with their professional development and promotion, and to fund PhD students too.</p> <p>We should be engaging more in joint proposals too.</p>		

	<p>In Faculty meetings we shared best practice on this, and we do more or less what other schools do, but perhaps they have more events and panels about grant writing.</p> <p>Should we organise more grant writing workshops (for research groups or smaller groups to discuss ideas, etc?).</p> <p>Should we organise a research away-day to discuss research and grant issues in SMS and Faculty?</p> <p>Appraisals. In other Schools academics are asked to have a 5 years plan for grants applications.</p> <p>This first overview is for you to reflect and open a discussion.</p> <p>FP Raised concerns that when the centralisation of research management will QM offer specialised expertise in maths in terms of funding opportunities and knowledge of the funding schemes/agencies that we need to be familiar with in order to apply to the right scheme at the right time?</p> <p>The Chair added that the new structure seems to be organised (at the senior level) according to the funding agencies rather than being subject based.</p> <p>AC added that it is likely to be a delay in the recruitment of a new Research Manager in Maths (and also SPCS). However, the new Research Manager will be in the School and in principle that person will have expertise in our subject.</p> <p>CB commented that small steps at School level could help in motivating people. So appraisals should be used to this effect. In the School there should be more motivation to apply for grant. For instance the travel fund that the School allocates to academics, shouldn't be removed if one gets a grant. There are other small steps that could be taken into consideration. Moreover, applying for a big grant requires time. And with the teaching and admin allocation we get it is mostly impossible to apply for a large grant.</p> <p>CB also agreed that academics should not go with many years without applying for a grant.</p>		
<p>5. New UKRI open access policy</p>	<p>There is a new policy, which we find rather confusing. UKRI is getting more strict with the publishers that we can fund the gold access from the block grant. And definitely they won't pay open access fees to any publisher that is not transitioning already to the open access route.</p> <p>Also, there are statements that need to be added at the end of the articles.</p> <p>If in doubt academics should liaise with JVK and EP.</p>		

6. PGR update	<p>Recruitment cycle for October 2022 is almost concluded but there were some delays in the Horizon Scanning Themes. At present we have 3 students starting in Data Modelling, 2 in Environment Biodiversity and Genomics, 2 CSC, 1 Minnie Brooke, and one BAME.</p> <p>Still 3 outstanding studentships.</p> <p>The distribution in Research Groups is not homogeneous. AF and JVK will report the current distribution in comparison with previous years' to Faculty (Dean and Deputy Dean Research), hoping that the process of allocating studentships will change in coming years.</p> <p>AF reported that in a meeting with Tim Warner (Director of the Doctoral College) it was felt that Tim understood that in Maths we rely on the Research Councils studentships and that these should be awarded to us without conditions so that we can distribute them in a fair way within the School.</p> <p>Also, the Horizon Scanning exercise has been confused for most, with nobody really having defined responsibilities. Primoz Skraba has been removed from the theme he was co-leading, so now we have studentships in Data Modelling but nobody representing SMS.</p> <p>ACTION: HoGs should let AF and the Chair know if they have further concerns about PGR studentships and how the current climate is affecting their group.</p>	HoGs	ASAP
7. S&E Pricing Structure for Industry/3rd Sector PhD Studentships	<p>The Chair presented the new pricing structure that S&E have agreed for industry or part industry funded studentships.</p> <p>The table that was circulated will be used to calculate and to cost studentships from now on.</p> <p>If in doubt academics should contact JVK and EP.</p>		
8. Impact update	<p>This item will be postponed as the Impact Lead is not present at the meeting.</p>		
9. UPDATE: A proposal to manage Research Enabling Funds and Flexible Research Funds	<p>We have now finalised a spreadsheet with information about FRF allocation for current year, and following years.</p> <p>The process was presented to SMT and at the School meeting. FRF holders were emailed with the information and the option to opt out. Nobody did.</p> <p>An email was sent to all staff to allow them to request funding if/when needed. All budget holders are now part of a mailing list via which all requests of this kind will be discussed.</p> <p>The process started on 13 April 2022.</p>		

	<p>ACTION: HoGs should remind their group members that the FRF process has started and they can use this avenue whenever needed.</p> <p>Studentships. Part of the process would include funding studentships from this budget. The natural next step in this direction would be that we ask the budget holders whether they would be willing to contribute a % (to be determined) of their FRF toward a studentship to add to the SMS allocation. A rough estimate would be 25%.</p>	HoGs	ASAP
10. Industry Lead update	This item will be postponed as KG is on sick leave.		
11. PDRA rep update	<p>The PDRA ended his contract in SMS. We have not been able to recruit a new PDRA in the last weeks.</p> <p>ACTION: HoG to liaise with the PDRAs in their group to check whether someone is willing to be part of the Research Committee.</p> <p>If we cannot find a replacement, the only option left would be to remove the PDRA membership from the Committee. In this case the PDRAs should be kept up to date by their HoG.</p>	HoGs	By the next RC meeting
12. Any other business	<p>The Chair explained that we have an FRF budget associated with the EPSRC PDRA grant. The Chair has already advertised this pot of money to the PDRAs for any activity they may want to take before the end of July.</p> <p>If we do not receive enough requests, then we will open the call to PhD students. If you know of PhD students that would benefit from this funding please let JVK and EP know.</p> <p>ACTION: HoGs to flag any funding request for PhD students to be used by the end of July.</p> <p>VL commented on the grant applications issue raised during the meeting. His view is that academics would be support from the School and help from the Faculty.</p> <p>Once EP leaves and with extra delays it would be very tough time for SMS. For EU projects, the office is working extremely well. The Faculty should know that we had key support within the School.</p> <p>The School can indeed help academics to have more time to write large grant proposals.</p> <p>JVK added that the 23 May the Dean for Research have organised a meeting for us to meet him. Please attend if possible.</p>	HoG	In this financial year
13. Date of the next meeting	The dates for the next meeting is 21 June 2022.		