

**School of Mathematical Sciences
Research Committee
Notes and Actions from Meeting held on 22 June 2021**

Present: Christian Beck (CB), Alex Clark (AC), Kathrin Glau (KG), Sasha Gnedin (SG), Mark Jerrum (MJ – Chair & DoR), Robert Johnson (RJ), Vito Latora (VL), Silvia Liverani (SL), John Moriarty (JM), Abhishek Saha (AS - DDoR), Juan Valiente-Kroon (JVK).

In attendance: Greg Slabaugh, Director of the Digital Environment Research Institute.

Apologies: Alex Fink (AF), Linus Wunderlich (LW).

Secretary: Elisa Piccaro (EP).

Minute	Summary of Agreed Actions	Who	When	Progress
Action 22.06.021 – 1	MJ and EP to investigate whether we need to change technology in the seminar room to accommodate seminars with people in the room and people connected online.	MJ/EP	ASAP	Completed
Action 22.06.021 – 2	MJ to investigate whether seminars slots can be teaching free for the relevant members of staff.	MJ	ASAP	
Action 22.06.021 – 3	KG to continue the discussion about this with DoR (MJ and JVK), JM and AC.	KG	ASAP	

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 13.04.21 – 1 AC said that there is no clear explanation for this low ratio of female PhD students. It may be a random variation.</p> <p>Action 16.02.21 – 9 AC reported that there are volunteers for this role and that someone will be appointed as LMS rep soon.</p>		
3. Introducing DERI, the Digital Environment Research Institute	Greg Slabaugh, the Director of DERI gave a presentation about the new research institute at QMUL. Slides will be circulated to this committee.		

	Academics were invited to join DERI to expand the network. Technical expertise is needed in scoping wider research proposals.		
4. Update from the Chair: - Grant News - Research Associate Funding - Maths DTP 2021 award	<p>The Chair gave an update on recent funding awards including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPSRC standard grants: Michael Ruzhansky, Ivan Tomasic and Behrang Noohi. • EPSRC small grant: Abhishek Saha. • Marie Curie individual fellowship with PI Shahn Majid. • EPSRC Research Associate Funding – the first round of RA appointments have been made. • EPSRC DTP – We only received half of the funding so far and will appoint 4 students to start in September. We expect the rest of the funding to be awarded to the School next year. 		
5. EDI analysis – seminar data	<p>SL shared the data from the seminar series by gender (of the speakers) for the academic year 2020/21. The data show an increase in the percentage of female speakers. Silvia reported that the same data will also be discussed in EDI committee and that the percentage split of the seminar speakers will be one of the actions of the next Athena Swan application.</p> <p>Would 40% female speakers be too ambitious as a target in 5 years time?</p> <p>RJ and MJ commented that the current 27% would be sustainable in the next 5 years, and that for instance in their group the 30% that was achieved this year will probably be aspirational in the future.</p> <p>JVK added that the 40% is an ambitious target, and it may be a challenge achieve this and sustain it in the next 5 years.</p> <p>The committee agreed that the increase of female speakers this year may be also due to the fact that seminars are online and female speakers may be able to give them. This would be something to consider next year, where we should attempt to have seminars in the room with the possibility of people joining remotely (including the speakers).</p>		
6. School seminars in a Covid/post-Covid world	<p>The Chair explained that keeping seminar series active and interesting is more getting challenging, because there is a lot more available online. So the first action would be to think how we could make the series relevant.</p> <p>Perhaps having joining seminars with other institution (some groups are already doing so) will be preferable.</p>		

	<p>The committee had mixed feelings about online seminars. They give the opportunity to join interesting discussions remotely, and to have more people to take part, but at the same time the social aspect lacks.</p> <p>Although some online seminars will remain, the committee agreed that seminars should resume (if at all possible) in the physical room; perhaps with seminar speakers who are locally to begin with.</p> <p>ACTION: MJ and EP to investigate whether we need to change technology in the seminar room to accommodate seminars with people in the room and people connected online.</p> <p>The Chair also asked the committee for feedback about seminar attendance and what could be done to increase the number of people engaging with the seminars.</p> <p>CB commented that at times it is impossible to join seminars because of the teaching commitments.</p> <p>ACTION: MJ to investigate whether seminars slots can be teaching free for the relevant members of staff.</p>	<p>MJ/EP</p> <p>MJ</p>	<p>Before the end of July.</p> <p>ASAP</p>
<p>7. Impact update</p>	<p>JM gave an update about the School view of impact, looking ahead to the next REF. In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We may be able to submit 3 impact case studies that we already submitted this year, as they may generate further impact. However, we will need three more. So we need to start thinking about these already. - Impact has been playing a role in academic promotions, so it is recognised by the School and Faculty as an important contribution. - Many of our impact case studies have resulted from interdisciplinary research. Academics are encouraged to attend sandpits and similar events. - We will invite a couple of impact case studies authors to talk at the next School meeting in September. - We may want to engage more with MSc programme and projects from the impact point of view, for instance by offering the students short placements. This would initiate further links with industry. - We should offer consultancy. This will be advertised on our website. 		
<p>8. Horizon Scanning</p>	<p>This exercise is intended to be an ongoing process, not something to be finalised quickly. But it may be useful to have such a strategy also in light of future appointments in the School.</p> <p>The document that was circulated by the Chair contains the items that we may have a hope of influencing in the future.</p>		

	<p>JVK will can carry on and track this process from September 2021 (as new DoR).</p> <p>The Chair commented that the majority of the items in the list are directed by other Schools in the Faculty and the expertise in SMS may come in as support. This may not be true all the times.</p>		
9. Industry Lead update	<p>KG gave a presentation about the strategic plan of getting the School more involved in work linked to industry. Slides will be circulated to this committee.</p> <p>One aspect of this is the placement of PhD students at the company. In this case we need to negotiate carefully with the company regarding IP, thesis content, etc. KG commented that usually the company gets the code, protect the data and leave the publication to the academic and student.</p> <p>Discussion was also around the promotion based on work that the academics deliver linked with industry. The common view was that the School strategy should include promotion in this case.</p> <p>Market supplement was also considered as a possibility. AC explained that this would have to be negotiated with HR.</p> <p>CB pointed out that one cannot just offer market supplement in one area only. Of course we need a way of retaining good researchers, but this is probably not the best way.</p> <p>KG pointed out that UCL offers £10k incentive to retain researchers in statistics for instance.</p> <p>JVK commented that we could use the bonus scheme to award exceptional researchers. He also pointed out that in SMS we don't have industrial mathematics, and we suffer from the absence.</p> <p>ACTION: KG to continue the discussion about this with DoR (MJ and JVK), JM and AC.</p>	KG	ASAP
10. Any other business	<p>AS and everyone else in the meeting thanked the Chair for his exceptional contribution as DoR in the last years. This is indeed his last Research Committee meeting as Chair.</p> <p>JVK will be chairing this meeting from September 2021.</p>		
11. Date of the next meeting	<p>The next meeting will be in September. Dates will be circulated when known.</p>		