MINUTES OF MEETING  
of the  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE  
held on  
Monday, 7 November 2011  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm  
Turing Room

Present:
Jacques Fleuriot (Chair), Jane Hillston, Murray Cole (for MOB), Jon Oberlander (forSR), Alan Smaill, Sethu Vijayakumar, Chris Williams, Julie Young, Marjorie Dunlop (Secretary)

Attending: Bob Fisher

Absent: Mike O’Boyle, Steve Renals, Dave Robertson

AGENDA ITEMS

Item 1 – Minutes of previous meeting
The Minutes of the previous meeting were adopted with the following corrections:
Item 2 (a) - Synergy grants are thought to be a replacement for cross-disciplinary advanced grants; single discipline advanced grants continue to exist and there is a deadline in February.
Item 5 – Alastair Scobie requested access to full proposals which have been awarded with a view to looking at how computing equipment is being included and justified. It is not the intention that all successful proposals will be available to everybody.

Item 2 - Matters arising
Item 1 – Discussion on remit and membership of Research Committee
Included in the discussion were ways of improving and enabling our research, research intelligence as to what calls are out there, decrease/increase our research focus, an un-pressured ‘horizon scanning’ event that would include young academics, institute reviews as per the feedback from the School governance document, improve the quality and quantity of research proposals, mentor and support members of the research staff to submit proposals, feed into the college level committee (CRC), more analytical information (what we are missing and why; how we compare with other schools, etc), targeting calls, duplication of emails re calls and possibility of having a central point to locate them, reviewing process for proposals (within Informatics who has grants and how much and outwith Informatics are we doing well/better/underperforming), co-opt people as needed, fellowships interviews (internal to School and cross college; decision as to who is going forward from Informatics and who could help out with interviews), need some point of contact with REF-related people (i.e. Bonnie, Alan Bundy and the two czars), need clarification on what 3* and 4* research papers are for the REF, requirements for 100 words on each paper (original, significant and rigorous).

Action
All - let JY know what you want with respect to the blog page and the streamlining of call information
Actioned

Action

DR to find out about the availability of the information ERI compiles between schools, etc.

Action

JF to invite Bob Fisher (replacing Steve McLaughlin as head of CRC) to the next meeting

Actioned

Action

JF to ask/invite Colin Adams when there are calls for TSB

Actioned

Action

JF to speak with JY about Fellowships (Microsoft and EPSRC)

Actioned

Action

JF to organise (via a wiki) a register of who has sat/sits on panels and which ones

JF talked to JY; ongoing

Action

DR to send email asking for feedback on how to improve the quality and quantity of research proposals, what is needed with respect to review and mentoring

Action

JF to ask Stephen and Phil to report to the group (perhaps at a special meeting)

JF to meet with Stephen and Phil on Wednesday; ongoing

Item 4 – New EPSRC policy on access to research outputs
There are two categories: gold (open access journal) and green (normal journal and open access similar to the library repository). There was discussion about the library repository and PURE. The admin staff in the level offices have been trained to upload data.

Action

JF to contact Alan and Stratis

Actioned

Item 5 – Any other Business
It was suggested that it would be very useful to have access to full proposals that have been successful.

Action

JY to advise Portofolio Managers

Actioned
Item 3 – Special IRC meeting on REF

Unfortunately, Alan Bundy is unable to attend today or the next special meeting of the REF. Dave will chair a meeting on the REF on 5 December

Action
JF will ask Phil and Stephen to attend

Item 4 – Working with College Research Committee

On occasion, Bob Fisher will be invited to attend the Research Committee. On being asked what his expectations are of the Informatics Research Committee, Bob responded that the Research Committee should feed upwards; identify research achievements from this School (big grants, fellowships, company spin outs, awards, etc); filter from the Institutes to the School (to Rosie Edwards for web publicity); to CRC via Dave Robertson; one of the biggest problems is that people have no idea what anyone in other colleges does; encourage cross-school and cross-college initiatives; work together more efficiently to promote higher quality; larger multi-school proposals for centres, etc; a forum for reacting to short term activities; possible logistic issues re budgets and grant holders. About six months from now, Bob hopes to have one hour videos that could be shown in other schools as informal presentations (eg at lunchtime). These videos would consist of one minute ‘elevator pitches’ of all academics in College (who you are and something about your research).

Item 5 – EPSRC Proposals: “National Importance” as a primary assessment criterion (Papers A & B)

It was reported that all grants should have a paragraph about national importance; this would be equally important to research quality. Discussion followed: possibility of a workshop on 14 December (date to be confirmed); what is the strategy in the School? what guidance are research councils giving to reviewers? what kinds of issues of national importance can Informatics address (climate change, socio issues, aging population, water); look at key industries and are we supporting them? we should collate key cyber changes; look ahead 10-50 years; what are the key emerging industries? look at present good ideas/best practice; as a community we should be asking the questions; are there key phrases?

EPSRC is coming twice in the next month (Lesley and Bob and Nigel re maths).

Action
Bob Fisher to ask for a meeting in Edinburgh; Bob to discuss with Lesley re invitation

Action
Each HoS should talk to people in their institutes so that we talk together as Informatics

Action
JY will review the last six months and see if anything has ‘national importance’

Action
Each Institute to nominate someone re the impact exercise
Item 6 – Discussion and agreement on process for peer reviewing of research proposals (Paper C)

There was discussion about what was happening in other colleges; requirement by CHSS for a document; the quality and quantity of research proposals; an opportunity for mentoring; the need for someone to check proposals and whether it was appropriate from a workload point of view for two or more colleagues to check proposals; lead in time for checking the proposals; is one week a reasonable timeframe (ERI asks for 48 hours to check and submit proposals); what provides the most benefit with the least impact; how should feedback be recorded; standard reference forms to be given to the peer reviewer; should reviewers be self-nominated or by HoS; the one strike policy of EPSRC puts a different perspective on the advisability of peer reviews; should reviewers be given training; opportunity to familiarise the reviewer with the proposal, criteria, ref guidelines

Action
JO to revise his document, send it to CHSS and copy JF

Item 7 – Discussion and agreement on plans for workshops on writing for researchers (Paper D)

JO reviewed the plans by Victoria Adams:

a) this would be a lunchtime session
b) this session is to raise awareness of what constitutes a good title; what are titles for; what are abstracts for
c) this session is to help people to take a critical look; to recognise what is important, identify four things in their own lives that are important; use 100 words for the writing. Early researchers are the targets for these workshops. Materials would be shared and it would be on a first come, first served basis. Suggested times: not Tuesday lunchtime (LFCS lab lunch); not lunchtime on the first Monday in the month (Research Committee)

Action
JO to ask Alan Bundy
JO to email research staff

Item 8 – Report/Discussion on the UK Research Office awareness-raising session on ERC’s schemes

There was discussion about advanced grants and synergy grants. There will be a workshop in Edinburgh in November. Edward Ricketts is the UKRO advisor for Edinburgh; advanced grants are not yet opened for 2012. It appears that there will be a change to the grading of the advanced grant: A (fundable, should get funding), B (not that good; can go back the following year), C (not that good). Panels alternate (sit every other year) but they are told if a proposal is going forward for a second time. Synergy grants require co-location and will in all likelihood require endorsement from the University (to stand any chance of funding). Sethu is working on a synergy grant. The timeframe for synergy grants is the end of January. Details about the grants are on the UKRO website.
Item 9 – Research Services website

JY, Neil McGillivray and JF met and discussed a website for research services. The intention is that it would be more centralised, one place to go for information, contain information as to who is on various panels; different views for different people. There was general agreement that the Wiki is OK. Information to be on the website includes: good impact statements, national importance details, alerts as to rule changes, links to ERI, avoidance of duplication, things of use to people.

Item 10 – Any other business

There is a strategic investment from College for the REF. They will be five year fixed contracts; individuals must apply before they come here.

Sethu is the representative for Robotics UK.

Kedar Pandya, Head of Engineering, EPSRC (Liam Blackwell’s equivalent) is to visit

Sethu is talking with David Lin of HC re synergy of robotics engineering

RA engineering Fellowships: two from Informatics (ICSA and IPAB) and one from college are at stage 1 – thanks for feedback

Sethu is involved with a synergy grant - Centre for robotic oncology in the School of Medicine, Western General imaging people, and Sethu.

Item 11 – Next meeting date

The date of the next meeting is Monday, 5 December 2011 at 12:00 pm in the Turing Room.