

# The University of Manchester

## School of Chemistry

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting Number 15  
held on Thursday 10 November 2005 at 3.30 pm in Room 7.28

Present: Professor GA Morris (Chair), Dr M Morris, Professor IH Hillier, Professor P O'Brien, Dr AC Regan, Dr SLM Schroeder, Dr EJ Thomas, Professor REP Winpenny, Dr A Fretwell (Secretary); Dr R Price (UMIP; by invitation)

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Professor Anderson (*vice* Turner), Professor Kell, Dr Popelier and Professor Turner.

### 2. Presentation by Dr Richard Price of UMIP

Dr Richard Price gave a presentation entitled 'Technology Transfer Opportunities and Incentives' (presentation attached). Dr Price discussed the UMIP structure and resources available and outlined the technology transfer process in place at UMIP. He emphasised that UMIP has £1M funding per annum to assist academics to establish proof of concept and another £1M pa available for follow-on funds. Dr Price also outlined the incentive and revenue share arrangements of the University of Manchester.

The Committee noted particularly the availability of significant funds to support exploitable research, the importance of third mission activities to the School, and the scale of the FEPS component of the UMIP operation

### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved subject to the correction that Professor Kell was present at the meeting.

### 4. Matters arising

Professor Morris reported the recent CRUK submission was unsuccessful, but that the Chemistry contribution had been singled out for praise; he thanked Dr Peter Quayle and Dr Andrew Regan for their contribution.

### 5. Future role of the Research Committee

Professor Morris circulated the Terms of Reference for the Research Committee and reiterated that the purpose of the Research Committee was three fold:

- to advise the Head of School and Management Team on research strategy
- to organise the School RAE submission
- to manage operational research issues

Professor Morris expressed his concern that a collective and collegiate input into research strategy was not happening. A discussion took place in which the following issues were raised:

How do we formulate research strategy?

- Professor Thomas felt that the only input into research strategy happened at the level of making staff appointments.
- Professor O'Brien wished to see the RC take an active role in profiling and monitoring research grouping activities.

How do we prepare in advance for new initiatives?

- It was felt important to encourage a small team to champion and take forward each new strategic initiative.
- Professor O'Brien suggested that such teams be invited to report to RC meetings.
- Dr Schroeder felt that self-interest was the only factor that helped get initiatives off the ground and that it was very difficult for non-professorial staff to get involved.
- The incentive of being good material for a CV was felt to be important.

Can the Research Committee bring people together, can it talent-spot and foster strategic alliances?

- Professor Winpenny gave his opinion that a single unified coffee room would assist with internal School interactions and communication.
- Can we organise a mini symposium with Life Sciences to encourage collaboration? It is more useful when a common theme is posed as a question rather than individuals talking about their own interests.
- There appear to be few tangible links with Pharmacy and Life Sciences; this is a weakness for the School.

It was agreed that the Research Committee will reorganise its meetings into three strands, dealing respectively with research strategy, RAE matters, and operational issues.

Group	<b>Research Committee</b>
Membership	Current Research Committee membership
Frequency of meetings	Twice yearly in May and October, with further meetings as requested by the Head of School
Terms of reference	(1) Annual review (summative) of research in May to feed into <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ biennial research report</li> <li>▪ updating of web-site</li> <li>▪ strategic plan</li> </ul> (2) Annual review (formative) of research initiatives in October, to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ identify research areas for the future</li> <li>▪ identify collaborations</li> </ul> (3) Further strategy meetings as required by the Head of School

Group	<b>RAE subgroup</b>
Membership	Dr Fretwell, Professor Morris, Head of School, Heads of Research Groupings
Frequency of meetings	Initially every six months, with increasing frequency as RAE deadlines draw closer
Terms of reference	To advise HoS and Management Team on RAE strategy To organise RAE return for School

Group	Operational subgroup
Membership	Dr Faulkner, Dr Fretwell, Professor Morris, Dr Regan, Dr Schroeder, Dr Popelier, Dr M Morris; Heads of Research Groupings or deputies are welcome to attend
Frequency of meetings	As required
Terms of reference	To advise HoS and Management Team on research operations and administration, and discharge delegated responsibilities including the School research database, website, biennial research report, and School publicity

Meetings will as far as possible follow the list of dates agreed previously. The provisional cycle of meetings is as follows:

1 Dec 05	Operations
5 Jan 06	Operations
2 Feb 06	Operations
2 Mar 06	Operations
30 Mar 06	RAE
27 Apr 06	Operations
25 May 06	Strategy: review of research grouping performance (half day meeting)
22 Jun 06	Operations

## 6. EPSRC DTA studentships allocation

The Management Team has decided that this year 13 studentships should be apportioned using the formula introduced last year, which allocates studentships in approximate proportion to the qualifying EPSRC spend which earns the DTA, and that one additional studentship should be allocated to each head of research grouping for use in attracting or retaining excellent potential graduate students. Dr Fretwell has circulated the spreadsheet showing the allocation of studentships. There is one adjustment to be made to account for a missing co-investigator share to Dr Joe McDouall not recorded on the EPSRC website.

The BBSRC DTA allocation is separate and uses a different model to allocate funds to Universities.

**Action: Dr Fretwell to circulate the revised allocation list.**

## 7. RAE 2008

Professor Morris reported on feedback from the External Examiners appointed for the External Review. Professors Holmes and Chisholm have requested a third reviewer is appointed to assist them with the task, with expertise in the area of physical and analytical chemistry, and preferably from the UK and a woman. Committee members suggested Professor Robert Donovan.

A presentation on the RAE was made by Professor Morris to the School Board.

## 8. External presentation

Dr Regan informed the Committee that the website has now been transferred to a local server and is implemented solely using DreamWeaver. The website has the same look

and feel as the CMS version; however we now have much more control over images and updating the site.

**Action: Heads of Research Groupings to review the content on the website describing their Research Groupings, and to pass new material to Dr M Morris for collation and mounting.**

The need for details of research colloquia and of postgraduate studentships available to be readily accessible via the web was noted.

**Action: GAM to investigate.**

## **9. Any other business**

The Faculty has requested comments on preparations for the next round of RCUK Academic Fellowships. We are asked to respond to Professor Gleeson's proposal that we continue with the two categories of 'Innovation in Characterisation, Engineering and Processes', and 'Complexity' from last year. It was noted that the key is to remain flexible but also to provide enough details to attract high quality candidates to apply.

## **10. Date of next meeting**

The next scheduled meeting, on Thursday 1 December, will be of the operations subgroup.

Ann Fretwell  
18 November 2005