

# The University of Manchester

## School of Chemistry

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting Number 39  
held on Thursday 13 November 2008 at 3.30 pm in Room 7.28  
**Operations Subgroup**

Present: Professor J Micklefield (Chair), Dr P Budd (and *vice Turner*), Professor R Dryfe, Professor E McInnes, Professor I Hillier, Professor P Popelier, Dr A Regan, Professor J Thomas (*vice Clayden*), Professor N Turner, Professor R Winpenny, Dr A Fretwell (Secretary)

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Professor Clayden, Professor Pimblott, and Professor M Turner

### 2. Minutes from previous meeting

No corrections to the previous minutes of the Operations meeting held on 17 July 08 were recorded.

### 3. Matters arising

It was noted that Professor S Flitsch is a new member of the Committee, as the Head of Biological research grouping, replacing Professor D Kell. Professor Kell was thanked for his contribution to the committee. Dr P Budd was welcomed to the Committee as the new Deputy Director of Research, replacing Professor D Procter; Professor Procter was thanked for his contribution to the committee.

### 4. Report from the FEPS Associate Dean of Research – Professor R Winpenny

Professor Winpenny reported to the Committee on research matters from a Faculty perspective; the following points were covered:

- There has been a lack of communication on research activity from the Faculty since December 2007; Professor Winpenny aims to open up the lines of communication.
- There is a need to diversify our sources of funding from a reliance on EPSRC, to include EU and industrial contracts.
- The EPSRC DTA allocation for next year will again be made directly to the University; however EPSRC will not give a breakdown of the contribution from individual Schools to the total. The Faculty would like to ensure that the DTA is distributed to faculties according to their earning contribution. Schools may be required to provide information on their contribution to the institutional award and should keep records. The Faculty would like to encourage sharing between Schools and Faculties of any partial studentship funding from Research Councils, to maximise the benefits to the University.
- Professor Micklefield requested that plans for allocation of BBSRC DTG (2009 to 2011) need to be considered urgently.

**Action: Professor Winpenny to speak with FEPS AD for Graduate Education. Dr Fretwell to provide Professor Winpenny with a list of academics eligible to bid into the BBSRC DTG (2009 to 2011)**

- There is no ORS studentship funding available this year.
- In reporting RAE results, the University favours a research power model, rather than grade point average.
- A citation analysis undertaken by Leiden has indicated that the Faculty does not do well. Publication numbers are high, but citation results are low. This has implications for the Research Excellence Framework, due to replace the RAE. There is still a problem in some publications not being correctly attributed to the University, because addresses are not given correctly.
- The University is soon to launch its equipment fund (approx £3m), which will provide matching funds for equipment bids on proposals.
- EPSRC are to trial a PhD Plus scheme from September 2009 in 12 institutions. A sum of £500k to the University will provide ten £50k allocations, which will fund a one year PDRA position, to enable a recently graduated PhD student to continue working on the project and maximise any publications and results arising from the PhD. How does the School identify its best three students to apply for this scheme?
- EPSRC administrators have indicated that funding priorities are being driven by the current spending review. The Research Council themes are very important and the Faculty is identifying champions in each of these areas, from each School, to network together. The Chemistry panel will disappear for assessing Programme grant applications, and these will be dealt with by a Physical Sciences panel.
- The University has a framework agreement with EPSRC, this is one mechanism for where Manchester can be involved in decision making at EPSRC and get Manchester areas of expertise brought forward for funding.
- Another round of Newton fellowships has been announced with a deadline of 12 January 2009.

## **5. Changing landscape of research funding (JM)**

A document on changes to the research funding landscape was tabled and discussed. The Committee requested that a small travel fund should be made available, to allow staff to build up networks to establish EPSRC Programme Grant and BBSRC LOLA proposals.

**Action: Professor Micklefield to ask the Management Team for funding for individuals to travel to networking meetings etc. to set up large grants**

## **6. Outcomes of meetings with individuals regarding personal grant funding issues**

Heads of research groupings (HoRGs) each reported on discussions held with members of staff within their grouping, regarding plans for submitting applications, with a view to encouraging larger proposals where appropriate, and to encourage staff to participate in networks and to take advantage of internal peer review advice.

In general, the level of activity reported from each grouping was very high. HoRGs reported they had found this a useful exercise and one that should be repeated at regular

intervals (ca. every six months). Future discussions may also include discussions about publications and other important research outputs.

**Action: HoRGs to arrange individual one-to-one meetings with members of their research grouping during March ahead of the next committee meeting scheduled for 24 April 2009.**

## 7. EPSRC thematic champion selection

The following thematic School Champions were proposed by the Committee:

Energy: Simon Pimblott and Nick Turner

Nanoscience: Peter Budd and Simon Webb

Next Generation Healthcare: David Procter and Sabine Flitsch

Digital Economy: Paul Popelier and Neil Burton

**Action: Dr Fretwell to contact proposed champions to confirm they are happy to become members of Faculty thematic network groups**

## 8. Nominations for prizes and awards

Following an email request from Professor Micklefield, Professor Clayden has suggested names of staff from his grouping for nominations for prizes and awards.

**Action: Remaining HoRGs to email Professor Micklefield with suggested names of staff to nominate for forthcoming prizes and awards**

## 9. Provisional DTA allocations (AF)

Dr Fretwell reported on the provisional EPSRC DTA studentship allocation for this year. As in previous years, the recommendation is that each HoRG is given a studentship to allocate strategically to the grouping. The remaining seven studentships will be allocated to individuals using a model based on the individual's contribution to the EPSRC award. Dr Fretwell tabled the results of the model allocation. It was agreed that this recommendation be made to Professor O'Brien, for discussion at School Management Team.

**Action: Dr Fretwell to email Professor O'Brien the provisional DTA allocation recommendation**

## 10. Any other business

Professor N Turner reported on the recent EPSRC Chemical Sciences and Engineering Grand Challenges Workshop. Eight themes and champions were identified; these will be presented to the Strategic Advisory team and considered at the EPSRC International Review committee in April. Professor Pimblott will write a summary of the meeting, with input from Professor Turner and Dr Webb.

**Action: Professor Turner to email Dr Fretwell with the list of identified themes from the EPSRC Chemical Sciences and Engineering Grand Challenges Workshop**

## 11. Date of next meeting

Strategy meeting: Thursday 15 January 2009, 2.00pm in room 7.27/7.28.

Ann Fretwell  
03 December 2008