

**Department of Paediatrics  
Management Committee/Graduate Studies Committee  
Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 12:00-14:00  
Via MS Teams**

Committee Members:

Georg Hollander (GH)	Shaka Obhiozele (SO)	Rebecca Slater (RS)	Irene Roberts (IR)
Sarah Atkinson (SA)	Anindita Roy (AR)	Holm Uhlig (HU)	Rinn Song (RS)
Alexander Jones (AJ)	Caroline Hartley (CH)	Laurent Servais (LS)	Carlo Rinaldi (CR)
Charlotte Walber (CW)	Philip Goulder (PG)	Andrew Pollard (AP)	Dominic Kelly (DK)
Teresa Lambe (TL)	Merryn Voysey (MV)	Laura Borg (LB)	Samantha Vanderslott (SV)
Daniela Ferriera (DF)	Stephan Sanders (SS)	Student Rep (SR)	Nasir Marwat (NM)
Sorcha Morrissey (SM)	Matthew Wood (MW)	Daniel O'Connor (DO)	Maheshi Ramasamy (MR)
Xinxue Liu (XL)	Khaya Rowland (KR)	Kristina Tanso (KR)	Sue Ann Costa Clemens (SCC)
Lucy Howarth (LH)	Parvinder Aley (PA)	Jessica Bryan Bentley (JBB)	

**MINUTES**

**1. Apologies for absence**

*Philip Goulder, Rinn Song, Matthew Wood, Stephan Sanders, Maheshi Ramasamy, Alexander Jones, Daniela Ferreira, Samantha Branch, Dominic Kelly*

**2. Minutes of meeting 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (GH)**

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

**3. Conflicts of Interest (SO)**

No conflicts noted.

**4. Matters arising and Action Points from meeting 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (not covered elsewhere) (GH)**

- Open access: This is an ongoing issue, and more updates will come.
- HR Service Review: Following on from the last discussion at the management meeting CW has been in touch with operational leads in the research groups in order to help HR shape the new changes from the recommendations made. SO will report back once there are further updates available.
- All new posts must still be submitted for review as part of the recruitment protocol process and obtain sign-off by HoD. The Divisional Board have now formally approved the re-introduction of the recruitment protocol.
- GH requested that PI's let Shaka and him know in good time if there are individuals, they feel would be ready to apply for Associate Professor title in the next 1-2 years. This is necessary so that we can ensure once an application is made that the criteria for these applications are fully met as this has been occasionally an issue previously.
- Management Minutes will be circulated to the Department in order to continue transparency. LB noted that these are all now available to view on the intranet, this has been conveyed in a Monday Morning Messages.

**5. Graduate Studies Committee (CR)**

- Update at next meeting.

**6. Administrative staff update (SO)**

- Staff update: Obioma ("Obi") Udeariry has now joined the Department as the new Senior Information Governance Officer. Obi will focus his attention on embedding information compliance into our operations at all levels. A further

aim is to create a retrievable and verifiable record of our information compliance actions so that assurance is in place to demonstrate that we are behaving in a way that is consistent with our obligations and responsibilities in this area. Obi will act as a main point of contact for compliance with the UK Government's trusted research policy framework.

## **7. HR update (CW)**

- Sorcha Morrissey is now on maternity leave and the baby arrived this week.
- HR team has 2 new staff members, Millie and Lucy are the most recent recruits. Lucy is a direct replacement to Delphine's post.
- Associate Professor update: The Department submitted 3 applications and are pleased to have been awarded all 3.
- Awards for Excellence: 35 applications have been received. The panel will meet later in June and a further update will be available at the next meeting.
- Peakon role out is underway, please encourage all of your team members to participate. GH queried whether there will be any further surveys for Peakon to ensure it is working well. CW suggested this would take place in 6 months.
- A new departmental committee for wellbeing has been set-up. 2 meetings have already taken place with Daniel O'Connor having recently been appointed as the Chair.
- Policies: CW provided an update on the different departmental policies supported by evidence to see how well each of them are currently working. In particular, the visa extension, the professional development and the nursery priority place scheme were highlighted. The next application round for professional development will take place in November and the updated policy is now available on the website. The department now has available 6 nursery priority places.

## **8. Finance update (SO)**

- At a Divisional level the final MSD budget which was planned to be submitted for sign off indicated a surplus position for 2024/2025 of £3.9m. However, this is distorted by the inclusion of a one-off residual grant balance from within Paediatrics which is contributing a £6m improvement overall and is unlikely to be repeated in the future. Without this one-off balance the Division's underlined budget was a £2.1m deficit position which is a worsening of £10.3m against their Q2 forecast. There was much concern expressed at the last Finance Review General Purposes Committee (FRGPC) about the broader financial trajectory of the Division. In this context Paediatric was one of the few departments which is indicating a surplus, in the case of Paediatrics of approx. £7m. A number of other departments indicated a worsening of their budgets for 2024/2025. One of the key factors in this worsening position was additional pay costs. Following on from the finance white paper all departments within MSD are intrinsically linked together. SO explained that there are a number of challenges around the budget for 2024/2025 and as a result one of the consequences is the reintroduction of the recruitment protocol. Crucially this protocol applies to all posts budgeted or otherwise and will include any underwriting or bridging. The Division are currently working on the operational details of this and an updated is expected soon. Despite putting forward a surplus budget for 2024/2025 the steer from the Division is

that this will not be sufficient and during Q1 we will need to demonstrate an improved position, it is unclear yet how this challenge will be met. Internally the Department will start to be more proactive and will check more frequently on what grants and income research groups and PIs are expecting to come in, so we are able to predict our position more accurately. The Senior members of the Department who have plans for growth will need to have a discussion on the sustainability of growth and the best ways to maintain this within the Department. It will be important for the Department to build and develop a 5-year plan which will require submission to Division.

**ACTION POINT: Shaka and Sam to work with PIs to gather the relevant information needed to enable submission of a 5-year plan once the timelines have been confirmed by Division.**

- Biomedical services are still financially deteriorating and are currently forecasting a £2.5m deficit in the next financial year. Division is keen to come up with some options to help address this issue.

## 9. Equality & Diversity Update (RS)

- RS shared some slides as way of an update. The Athena Swan Gold Application has been submitted after multiple rounds of very positive Divisional review. The outcome is expected anytime from 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024. RS thanked everyone involved in the application. RS highlighted 4 main areas of the application which demonstrate the commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity:
  - Reward and Recognition Scheme
  - Early Career Research Committee
  - Associate Professor & Professor gender balance
  - Closing the gender pay gap

RS also explained that there are always improvements to be made and presented data on how priorities have been selected to build a strategy for the next 5 years. Priorities will include: a long-term gender balance in senior academic appointments, pay and conditions; a reduced gendered impact on work life balance, specifically for female clinical academics and researchers; gendered impact on DPhil funding for female staff; implementing a better workplace culture strategy to improve staff experience; ERC work will continue supporting academic careers for women and using data to drive positive cultural change. An action plan has been formulated for 2024-2029 and will be available on the internet shortly.

## 10. Comms (LB)

- As part of the Athena Swan submission, it became clear that there was no consistency to the 'Our Team' bluebox on the main website. After a consultancy on this it has been agreed that the bluebox will be removed and instead will have a generic search function across the 'our team' page. All individuals will retain their profiles which will be searchable. Revision of 'Our Team' page is underway. Please feel free to provide any feedback to LB. RS added that one of the challenges of having the bluebox is that there is inconsistency with job titles. Work will take place over the next few years to standardise this.
- GH reminded everyone about the date of the Garden Party and to ensure you sign-up to attend.

### 11. OUCAGS/ACF/ACL updates (AJ)

- In the last round of the NIHR ACF applications, applicants interested in Paediatrics and those for Obstetrics and Gynaecology were interviewed in December 2023. and a Paediatrician candidate (Surina Fordington), with a strong interest in Cardiology was successful and will be joining the Early Prevention of Cardiometabolic Disease group in September 2024.
- There has also been a round of interviews for 2 ACL posts in Paediatrics. Posts to be “refilled” will need to be flagged with AJ so that a suitable coordination with OUCAGS and the deanery can be made.

### 12. Research Excellence Framework (REF) (GH)

- The next REF will conclude in 2028 and will assess research and impact between 2021 and 2027. Philip Goulder is the Departmental representative and John Frater, NDM, will lead the divisional submission.

We may create a Departmental committee to review the submission of Paediatrics.

Details are scarce at the moment. It is anticipated that the UK funding bodies are seeking to change the emphasis of national assessment from the performance of individuals to the contribution of institutions and disciplines made to healthy, dynamic and inclusive research environments. It has also been indicated that the review would like the assessment to encompass broader contributions to research and the research process.. Research volume will be determined from average staff numbers over multiple years. There will not be any minimum or maximum contributions of any individuals.

Research England is currently reviewing their approach to strategic institutional research funding.

The exercise drives research excellence across the UK, provides accountability for public investment in research, and informs the allocation of around £2 billion of block-grant research funding each year.

New: Recognition is given to the people, culture and environments that underpin a vibrant and sustainable UK research system across all research enabling individuals.

#### Goals:

Reward a broader range of research outputs, activities and impacts and compensate those institutions that strive to create a positive research culture and nurture their research and research-enabling staff.

#### 1. People and culture (25% weighting)

This element replaces the environment element of REF 2014 and 2021 and will be expanded to include an assessment of research culture. Evidence to inform assessment of this element will be collected at both institutional level and at the level of disciplinary submissions.

#### 2. Contribution to knowledge and understanding (50% weighting)

This element expands the outputs element of REF 2014 and 2021. The assessment will continue to be largely based on assessment of submitted outputs. In REF 2028, however, at least 10% of the score will be based on evidence of the broader contributions to the advancement of the discipline.

#### 3. Engagement and impact (25% weighting)

This element replaces the impact elements of REF 2014 and 2021, although it is similar to the impact element of 2014. Submissions will consist of both impact case studies and an accompanying statement to evidence engagement and impact activity beyond case studies.

### **13. AOB**

- PA added that she has drafted a document which will be circulated for review once it has been reviewed by SO. The document is related to visa renewals across the department and the increasing number and the policy on this. The Policy is currently that the Department will fund 20% of the fee for a renewal as long as the individual matches the contribution. There is also PI and line manager discretion depending on source of funding through grants to cover the remainder. This leads to two aspects, 1. There are discrepancies across the department as in how our staff are treated depending on the luck of the draw of the grant, they may be on and 2. These in particular are visa renewals, so it is related to people who have demonstrated that they are people who we wish to retain and have already invested in. PA would like to put forward a policy that as a department we would fully cover the cost of visa renewal for these members of staff. The average cost is £800-900. This is a relatively low cost in terms of staff wellbeing, appreciation and retention.
- AR provided an update from the MSD Research Culture Committee; a few documents have been requested from each department by Division to signpost to all staff and students. These documents will be circulated for review on the intranet.

### **14. Date of next meeting: Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024**