

Recruitment Committee

1st June 2015 10.30am

Room 1.16 Informatics Forum

Present: Helen Pain **HP** (*Convenor, Recruitment Officer of IGS*)
 Colin Stirling **CS** (*Director of Teaching*)
 Bob Fisher **BF** (*Director of Graduate School*)
 Effie McDonald **EM** (*Publicity Officer*)
 Teresa Ironside **TI** (*Head of Informatics Student Services*)
 Alistair Hill **AH** (*Recruitment Committee Secretary*)

Apologies: Ilias Diakonikolas, Martin Wright, Fraser Pullar, Kate Farrow, Gillian Bell

Approval of minutes from previous meeting on 4th December 2014 – Minutes approved as a true and correct record.

1. Marketing and Advertising

a. Material: School prospectus, Informatics entry into University 2016 prospectus and entry requirements

EM confirmed that the Undergraduate Prospectus was finished by January and will be updated in September/October for next January.

ACTION: (carried over from previous meeting) ITO to complete audit of all 1st year students that fail courses.

b. PG Advertising: EM placed advertisements for all Informatics PhD's on the FindaPhD.com website at the very reasonable cost of £100. The ads run out in December at which point we can look at numbers and review.

c. PG prospectus: This is produced by Communications & Marketing and covers taught Masters and research degrees. EM and BF are currently going through consultation for the 2016 edition. There was some discussion around whether we should mention the Data Science and the Robotics MSc's which are due to start 2016 and 2017 respectively. It was decided that they should not be mentioned until they have been through the Board of Studies as they will be online and we can put them in the prospectus next year. Prospectus 2nd round consultation is due for Tuesday 2nd June. It emerged that MVM are offering an online Data Science course which has been through our Board of Studies but will still need to go through the MVM Board of Studies.

2. Recruitment Committee Activities: Strategic Direction (also covered point 5. 2015/16 Intake Report)

Where should we be targeting our resources based on recent intakes?

Are there particular groups where we wish to attract more students?

Do some programmes need more promotion?

We looked at key data for where we focus attention e.g. international students. Current PG intakes – the College view is that we don't recruit enough Scottish Students and there has been an increase in numbers from the rest of Europe. MW feels an increase in overseas students

should be the priority. We have a target of 125 students from Scotland & EU, 25 from RUK and roughly 70 or 80 from Overseas.

HP noted that last year we rejected 450 applicants and this year we have rejected 912. 41 unconditional firm acceptances is slightly up on last year. There has been a big rise in EU students. We still can't say for definite how many are coming but the 'Unconditional Firm's and 'Conditional Firms' are likely to be here if the latter meet their conditions.

Targets are set in February and we're not allowed to positively discriminate for Scottish students. We have to ensure more people apply. Also we can't raise the criteria part way through an admissions cycle. Minimum rates have gone up from last year we now ask for 4 A's. If the University takes too many or too few students there is a financial penalty. Informatics is less successful in attracting RUK students than some other schools so we're happy to take more Overseas students.

Can try and recruit more widening participation students (from deprived backgrounds). This year we have 9 expected compared with 2 last year who both turned up. We could potentially attract more if we had an Outreach post within the school (we used to have one). HP to push for this at the relevant meetings.

How do we attract more students in? EM suggested that we encourage our staff to mention our programmes when they go on trips and that we could speak to other schools to see if they face similar issues.

HP mentioned the 3 sets of figures from the Recruitment Report come from 3 different places (wiki, EUCLID and Theon). BF mentioned that on average half of PGT students show up (e.g. 150 out of 300). They need at least a 2.1 undergrad degree or equivalent and then it's at the discretion of the College staff who gets an offer. We have 95 students on the list of fully accepted or conditional.

ACTION: EM to find out from other schools about why we're not attracting as many Scottish undergraduate students. HP will obtain more figures.

For Research students picked up, screened, with selector and HG generally means that no funding is currently available but the application has not yet been rejected. TI pointed out that for the PhD's there is no end point for applications as they can continue throughout the year although there is for CDT's. There are 14 funded offers made by Robotics and done by Heriot-Watt. We don't know the exact split of UK and Overseas RAS CDT applicants. ESPRC are OK with students who done a bachelor's degree in the UK as they like a good mix. For the CDT's it's good for British industry if we can get students to stay.

EM said to remind people to take flyers to conferences as it can be expensive to send physical posters to other Universities and it would be good to use contacts we already have. BF mentioned that the CDT's do a reasonable job of this but we should send round an email reminding people to mention our PhD's when going abroad. CS and HP agreed that personal contact is the way forward. Peak times for funding are November and February and we should not prioritise any particular programmes just Overseas and RUK.

BF suggested targeting students from Mexico and Nigeria for example and this lead to the question of which are the best Universities from every different country. BF has such a list and will share it. He'll see if he can email colleagues to find out if they have any contacts in those Universities and if not we will target the department head as a default.

3. UG Activities:

ACTION: (carried over from last meeting) HP to try and get students involved and present demos on Open Days.

ACTION: (carried over from last meeting) EM to send HP link

a. Post Application Visit Days (PAVD's) 2015

There were 2 PAVD's over Easter and the first one on 1st April 2015 had 32 guests. The second had 31 guests so numbers were high. One to ones and talks from current students proved very useful. We don't know the conversion rates but this can be checked from last year. We need to ensure the website looks polished. BF mentioned it would be useful to know if undecided students actually came here.

b. Open day planning for June and September events

EM is currently recruiting for the events on 19th June and 26th September. September is the biggest one with almost as many parents turning up as applicants (60-70). HP proposed that we work out what needs done for the open days and then ask all staff to indicate what they are and are not willing to do. The idea of offsetting staff that do more at open days against Tutorials is untenable at present as we need as many staff as possible for the Tutorials.

c. Conversion activities

EM reported that last year we used Mailchimp but there were problems with the data so the University procured Dotmailer to be the new Mailchimp and info was sent out to applicants about Foresthill. There was a 62% open rate. Email addresses came from Theon and there were links to various things. The Informatics Facebook page is not very popular for some reason.

d. Sutton Trust Summer School

The Sutton Trust has money to support widening participation. It consists of a week-long residential course with lessons activities and a final presentation with the aim of showing the students what we do and giving them experience of different subjects. Last year there were 2 students and this year we have 9 students signed up.

4. PG Activities**a. PG Open Days report and plans**

70 students registered for the last Open Day and only 35 attended, which was quite disappointing. The next one is on 18th November. CDT's had an open day in February where 30 students registered and 15 turned up so we work on the assumption that about half will turn up.

b. Virtual Open Days

Virtual Open days have been a big success with 9 out of 20 attendants becoming fully matriculated students (30th June - 6/10; 2nd July - 3/10). EM and Michael used the University equivalent of Skype, presented slides and had a question and answer session. The sessions were early (8am) and late (7pm) to cater for different geographical areas. Due to the limitations of the technology it's probably not scalable. Last year it was targeted across all MSc's and HP suggested we should do Virtual open days again this year. EM to take forward and decide on pool. There's not a huge lead in time to get current students to help but we'll keep a note on the success we get from it. Numbers last time were low overall but high compared to some other schools.

c. Conversion activities report and plans

The CDT's already do a lot of conversion activities. Last year all of the MSc conditional offer holders were emailed. (see above for conversion activity reports and plans).

5. 2015/16 intake

Report discussed under point 2 above – Recruitment Committee Activities

6. Schools Liaison/Outreach post

HP will continue to lobby for this post as a way of encouraging more Scottish students to apply and also to disseminate knowledge about Informatics to schools.

7. Other

a. Group Visits

44 Dutch students recently visited and were targeted towards the CDT's. Comments were made that it was very well organised.

b. Update on China

We have one funded place student on the joint PhD with Beihang.

c. A.O.B

Nothing noted.

8. Approximate date for next meeting

Next meeting intended for the end of August 2015.