Recruitment Committee Meeting
Tuesday 7th June

Room 1.15 Informatics Forum

Present: **Helen Pain HP (Convenor, Recruitment Officer of IGS)**
                      Nigel Topham NT (Head of Graduate School)
                      Amanda MacKenzie AM (Graduate School)
                      Adam Lopez AL (UG Admissions Officer)
                      Bjorn Franke BF (Director of teaching)
                      Heather Walker HW (Publicity officer)
                      Alistair Hill AH (Secretary)

Apologies: **Neil Heatley, Ajitha Rajan**

Approval of minutes from previous meeting on 8th October 2015 – Minutes approved as a true and correct record.

Actions from previous meeting:

BF: Extra support for MSc students especially with regards to additional mathematics provision being made available – ongoing.

HW: 'All applicants must have a sufficient mathematical and informatics background for their chosen area of study.' Line to be added to brochures.

NT: Ensure there are more current thesis titles on the web and that they are more visible. Institutes to keep a list of prospective topics and some (like ICSA) are already doing this.

1. Marketing and Advertising:
a) UG: School prospectus, informatics entry into University 2017 prospectus and entry requirements

HW is currently collating changes to the prospectus.

b) PG: PG Prospectus: other communication and marketing

HW: Following consultation with Committee members and CDTs, we renewed our advertising with Postgrad Solutions, and have paid for a targeted email which needs to go out before the end of October, flagging up our open day. We declined further advertising with Prospects Postgraduate Directory (renamed the Postgraduate Study Guide) as we had no evidence that we had gained students through it.

2. 2016/17 Intake - see report
a) UG Data and Projections

HP: This came up at the Teaching Committee. UG numbers are up on last year and there are also a slightly higher number of rejections. Results will affect final numbers

from conditional offer holders. Next year the minimum offer goes up which is a measure we supported although it was opposed by College.

b) PGT Data and Projections

HP: The summary figures that NH collated only show students who are coming. It could be 162 as conditional firm offers were higher than at 1st June 2015 but we do not usually get that conversion rate.
College handle admissions for taught MSc and we want more control. Applicants need a 2.1 and are checked for programming and English but we do not know how much discretion College Admissions have on that. We had asked to increase the level of English required and College said no. NH's new intern will look through past applications and find out what are the best predictors of student performance. Recently at an event some new computing students were asked to write a simple piece of code and could not do it. In future it will be more clearly stated that 'All applicants must have a sufficient mathematical and informatics background for their chosen area of study.'

Another option is for the school to have more involvement in the selection process by looking at any application which satisfies the minimum criteria. Ajitha is in place as MSc Selector with Boris Grot and Hugh Leather volunteering to get involved.

NT: Last year out of 700 students, 300 arrived which is a 40% conversion rate with overall numbers 35% up.

HP: Last year we did not expect 300 students and this year there is better staff cover in place. The referendum could have affected conversion rates last year and REF has reported so we may be up again this year. College proposed an MSc deposit fee to discourage people from not turning up but any changes cannot be made mid cycle.

BF: Last year there were so many students that we did not have enough PT's so this year there is overprovision built into the plans.

c) PGR Data and Projections

NT: PGR figures are roughly the same as last year. Funding is a big constraint and most of our applicants are from overseas. The Data Science CDT has a high volume of applications with ICSA less popular because many people apply to the Pervasive Parallelism CDT instead. Some applicants are rejected due to lack of funding although we do issue self-funded offers on occasion. Scholarships and Graduate school funding has been allocated and we have a lot of good students.

There were 3 EPSRC DTA awards intended for UK applicants which were not taken up. NT emailed the selectors and agreed with HW that they could be advertised more widely. NT to send details to HW to advertise.

NT: There is a new type of PhD scholarship in the pipeline called a Teaching Scholarship which will be made up of part stipend and part paid work as a Tutor. The similar Principal's Scholarships do not cover overseas fees but with the new ones they would

not have to pay overseas fees as they would be teaching staff. At present we have to pay £25-£30k per overseas student but we only get 3 PCDS and 2 EGRS awards. These new scholarships will be effectively unlimited.

HP: How many hours would they be allowed to do and would it be full time or part time?

NT: Completion rates of PhD's are poor so they would need an extra 6-12 months at the start where they are not registered as a student or we effectively run it like a 1+3 programme. 20 hours per week is the maximum averaged over the whole year which is permitted by UKVI. This will be piloted in 2017 and every school in the College wants to be the pilot.

BF: Does an identified area of teaching provision inform the selection process?

NT: The school as a whole identifies an area (eg Database Systems) and names a scholarship for that. For 6-12 months before the start of the PhD the incumbent shadows and trains and works on things relevant to their PhD with the clock not running.

HP: Sounds like an internship.

NT: Still many i's to be dotted and t's to be crossed.

3. Recruitment Committee Strategic direction – updates
PGT entry - strategies for next year re MSc recruitment

HP: Proposal for MSc Admissions -With the goal of increasing the quality of MSc entry, in particular at the lower end, we need a more detailed analysis of our current cohort (e.g. entry, transcripts, home universities), their performance on specific courses, or pieces of work, and their outcomes. We will explore the impact of lower English Language levels, with a view to collecting evidence to support raising these. We will also look at potential predictors of programming skill, following concerns raised by several staff.

We propose that we have an intern working on analysis of what factors may be used as predictors of student performance, over the summer, using the data from the current cohort. We will also look at scholarships students, their performance, in order to identify further possible predictors.

We also propose involvement of selectors in the MSc Admissions process, for 2 to 3 years, to further determine better criteria for selection.

A further proposal is online assessment of programming, not for selection purposes, but to enable students considering applying to better judge the level of skill needed for the relevant courses.

4. UG Activities:
a) Post application visit days (PAVDs) plans for forthcoming events

HW: PAVD's went well with the following numbers:
30 April - 43 applicants registered to attend, plus 34 guests
8 April - 34 applicants registered to attend, plus 35 guests
PT: NH thinks 2 PAVD's is reasonable with 1 for home students and one for overseas students. We don't need 3 PAVD's.

b) Open Day: reports (HW) and planning for 2016/2017 events - issue of staff recruitment

HP suggested we divide activities into smaller pools of staff so we know who does what. At the moment the number who do not do much is usually small. Smaller pools means it would be easier to chase and we could also target specific institutes or staff for things like animation or CDT's.

HW suggested that if someone drops out of an event it should be their responsibility to find a replacement.

PT suggested that we could sign up everything in advance for the whole year as far as possible. HW replied that some people will not.

HP mentioned that female staff should not be overworked for representation of gender purposes.

HW is expecting 150 visitors on 17th June and is worried about staff dropping out so may run an emergency backup list by looking for volunteers to be on it.

c) Conversion activities: report and plans

NH has recruited an intern to contact all new students across UG and PG. This should help with conversion.

d) Sutton Trust Summer School: plans for 2016 (HP)

HP expressed gratitude for the 3 out of 4 staff who are doing it again. Kami, Adam, Ian and Areti are running programming, security and translation workshops. There is a broadening participation event organised by a different department which is going on at the same time. 8 students expected to attend this year and conversion rates from last year are not known.

5. PG Activities:
a) PG Open Days report and plans

Next PG open day will be 16th November. The event last November ran a little late but was well attended and had good talks although the talks this year could be better coordinated so that certain areas do not overlap.

b) Virtual Open Days

CDT's held virtual open days and other institutes did not. This seems to work.

c) Conversion activities: report and plans

Covered above.

6. Schools Liaison/Outreach post: clarify status of this

PT said we have nothing concrete yet on this post as it will be impacted by other work and will not happen until September. It will be either an Informatics Student Services or Knowledge Management position and may have an impact on existing positions. An outreach post is needed and not just for students but for general publicity too. Most likely to come under ISS.

7. Other:
a) Update on Overseas/China (HT)

(HT not present) HP said NH had reported with a summary and presentation from UoE's changes in policy which she had asked him to circulate across the board for anyone involved with recruitment policy.

b) Any other business

None.

8. Date for next meeting: October 2016