Recruitment Committee

8th October 2015

Room 1.16 Informatics Forum

Present: Helen Pain **HP** *(Convenor, Recruitment Officer of IGS)*
                      Effie McDonald **EM** *(Publicity Officer)*
                      Bjoern Franke **BF** *(Director of Teaching)*
                      Henry Thompson **HT** *(Director of Internationalisation)*
                      Martin Wright **MW** *(Director of Professional Services)*
                      Kate Farrow **KF** *(ITO Manager)*
                      Fraser Pullar **FP** *(Graduate School Manager)*
                      Pim Totterdell **PT** *(Knowledge Manager)*
                      Heather Morgan **HM** *(Publicity Officer)*
                      Nigel Topham **NT** *(Director of Graduate School)*
                      Neil Heatley **NH** *(Head of Informatics Student Services)*
                      Alistair Hill **AH** *(Recruitment Committee Secretary)*

Apologies: None

Approval of minutes from previous meeting on 1st June 2015 – Minutes approved as a true and correct record.

1. **Marketing and Advertising**
    a. Material: EM is now onto the 2017 intake UG prospectus and is co-ordinating with College. They have asked for comments and the deadline for the first round of comments is 16th October. College are pushing to have all the information about additional costs (books and resources etc) and are looking for as many people to comment as possible. HM will co-ordinate comments of NH, KF and BF whose remit is to check the content of the prospectus.
    There is also an in-house Informatics UG prospectus which comes out in January, needs updating and circulating for comments. HP mentioned that we don't currently have a selector and BF confirmed we do have a candidate. HP asked to ensure that comments are requested.

    b. PG Advertising: There are issues around what websites we want to advertise on and where we want to spend. The current group of adverts run out in December so HM to look at that before January.

    c. PG prospectus: EM working on 2016 PG prospectus after consultation.

2. **2015/16 Intake**
    a. UG data and projections
    We had 200 in total which was only 13 over our target of 187. This is a significant improvement on last year when we were vastly over target. The prospectus advertises a minimum offer and a likely offer and at some point in February College gives us a target based on previous targets and projections. Last year some low offers were made to people who missed out by one point or so and this partly led to accommodation problems. This year we have pushed the offer up and nearly hit our target. This year we should push to put offer up again. MW said there is no intelligence about accommodation shortages and we should reserve our position for the time being. HP stated higher offer attracts higher calibre and asked if we can look at a possible

correlation between points and achievement. MW said that some Universities make UF offers on predicted rather than actual grades. HP mentioned that advanced higher maths was strongly encouraged and NH said some people can't do that at high school but we still need to be able to let them in. NT mentioned that we get very few 17 year-olds through the door.

There was an increased number of offers and a huge increase in applicants last year from 1400 to 1900. Rejections also increased. Overall fewer declined relatively. KF mentioned that programming exams affected accommodation issues with a maximum capacity of around 140 in one sitting. INF1-FP had around 250 students and we can't control who takes the course as an outside subject from another school.

b. PGT Data and Projections

Around 262 MSc students arrived but some students may still arrive. BF asked about getting more reliable estimates and MW replied that the Business School take a deposit from applicants thus making it less likely that they will not turn up. MW to discuss with Teaching Committee and Strategy Committee if we can take forward an up-front deposit scheme as it seems worth investigating. MSc figures are broken down by degree and decision but not funding source. Design Informatics also has an application avenue through ECA so has some ECA students on it. MSc Informatics figures are respectable.

There were concerns around the skills on entry of MSc Cognitive Science students with many wanting to change degree. BF asked if we can say more specifically what we need. HP said that last year they had extra maths tutorials and would do the same this year whilst providing extra information at decision stage. HT said extra tutorials should be part of the programme but if we don't change the requirements people will still turn up. Last year it worked.

ACTION: Ask Teaching Committee about help for students being formalised into the programme.

ACTION: Provide more info to students on the web and in the prospectus to help them to decide and warn them about high level of maths required.

c. PGR Data and Projections

FP said there have been a few conversions recently with FP to bring numbers summary relating to funding to a future meeting. We need Heriot-Watt figures too (for the joint programme).

3. Recruitment Committee Strategic Direction

KF said we've historically struggled to recruit good UK students for funding with the better students maybe being EU. NT mentioned that we invite people to the PGT and PGR open days and asked if we have a policy document for recruitment. He said we get plenty of overseas students and it's fine if they are self-funded but if not then they need a studentship so overseas student funding can be a problem. KF mentioned that we can't use lack of funding as a reason for rejection and very often they need acceptance from us before they can apply for funding. NH asked if we could give presentations to feeder universities and asked if we could find out which universities are likely to produce our students. HP mentioned that the CDT's have their own recruitment on findaphd.com website.

NT said that up to date web pages help and it's better if the prospective student doesn't have to click down too deeply to see the thesis titles and areas of research. Institute web pages to be looked at. PT is still working on it for CDT's and trying to get more student profiles on PURE. NT said it might be useful to have a rotating list of elevator pitches on the web page.

ACTION: Look at the proposal to have more thesis titles on the web.

KF pointed out that there are several emails sent throughout the year aimed at conversion for taught MSc's and we should suggest to supervisors to maintain contact with potential students. Can we attract more Scottish students for taught MSC's? KF said Scottish student numbers have gone up over the past few years. NT said Scottish students have high applications and low acceptance rates and we're not allowed to discriminate on students from Scotland but we can exercise discretion with a small handful who just miss out on their conditions. NH said we need a huge amount of detail contained in personal statements as it is used in borderline cases. Edinburgh has such a high volume of applications that it is easier to decide on a purely academic basis that it is to look at personal statements. Admissions at College will typically offer about 220 places if they want 200 students as some will not turn up. 63 people who declined were asked to complete a decliner's survey. The majority decline as they are going to another university. Can we ask which universities they go to? NH says the university has a certain expansion target and we are only 15% of the way to the 2020 target so far. If we expect 300 MSc students would we get the resources? The independence referendum last year meant numbers were down across Scotland last year and we are expecting a bounce in interest in Scotland this year. The School has to take more students but keep their quality high. KF stated that we need an increase in resource (admin and academic) and the Strategy Group should discuss that. HP said we're currently doing well and should think about strategies.

4. UG Activities:
   a. **Post Application Visit Days (PAVD's) 2015**
      There are 3 PAVD's throughout the year for people who have applied but not yet committed to coming here. There were 2 in April and 1 in March which had about 60 people (including parents of applicants). They are conversion events and the one to one sessions with academic staff received good feedback and resulted in a high number of conversions. Next PAVD's due to be held in 2016. HM and KF to put dates in the calendar.

   b. **Open day reports and planning for 2016 events**
      The June and September visit days saw attendance down across the whole university although the people who did come seemed to be very knowledgeable about the subject area and had done their homework. The last one was 24th September and the next one is due for June next year for UG.

   c. **Conversion activities**
      Covered above.

   d. **Sutton Trust Summer School**
      The Summer School is for people from disadvantaged areas and is part of widening participation which has been given a new name. Last year 7 attended in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. 2 converted. This year 9 attended in the morning and 9 attended in the afternoon. There were 4 female, 5 male, 2 Scottish and 7 RUK. We won't know how many converted until next November. Big thank you to all of the PhD students who helped.

5. PG Activities
   a. **PG Open Days report and plans**
      18th November is the date for the next PG open day with speakers in place. Last year saw 75 people register and 45 people attend. There is a talk on the new Data Science MSc planned and we will look at the figures and see if there are any other areas we want to push. PT mentioned it would be useful to have an admin person to answer admin questions as well as

an academic person for the academic questions. HM has arranged for a former colleague to come in and talk as they did for another school.

b. Virtual Open Days
c. Conversion activities report and plans
Covered above.

6. Schools Liaison/Outreach post
We were trying to create a brand new post but can it be an academic post? Specialist outreach knowledge is required. This committee is a sub-committee of the Teaching Committee. Are there people in the School already who could do this? HP to table it for Teaching Committee and ask if anyone would be willing to do outreach in addition to an academic post. There are other jobs that we need to fill as higher priority than this one (eg. selector) We need to identify who might be interested and ensure that they are good at communicating.

7. Other
a. Group Visits
20 Danish schoolchildren who were interested in animation recently visited us. It would be a good idea to try and organise the different activities into groups so that everyone is not asked to do everything.

b. Overseas/Internationalisation
HT said there were 7 2+2 students recruited through engineering who entered joint degrees in 3rd year. 5 are Computer Science/Engineering (we get half funding) and 2 are Peking University 3+2 students who will get degrees from both universities. We're hoping to grow the numbers over the coming years. HT said South and Central America are on the top of his list for getting more international students. Alignment between the origin university and us has to be accurate in terms of requirements. One student missed a course in Edinburgh but ended up getting it from Peking. HT and PT to keep us informed.

c. A.O.B
Nothing noted.

8. Approximate date for next meeting
Next meeting intended for January 2016.