

**The University of Dublin
Trinity College**

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 24th February 2005

Present Ian Robertson (Dean of Research), Doris Alexander (DA), Philip Lane (PL), Ailbhe Ni Chasaide (AN), Jane Ohlmeyer (JO), Deirdre Savage (DS), Ryan Sheridan (RS).

Apologies John Fitzpatrick, Dermot Kelleher, Marina Lynch, John Murray, John O'Hagan, Patrick Prendergast

In attendance

(ex officio) Valerie Smith

RS/04-05/38 Minutes of meeting held on 20 January 2005

The Minutes were approved and signed.

SECTION A: Policy/Implementation

SECTION B

RS/04-05/42 Research Committee Funding – Unspent Balances

DA gave an overview of a document circulated to the Committee, describing the Research Committee Funding unspent balances. Decisions were made as follows:

Start-up Fund pre 2001: outstanding balances should be drawn back, accounts closed down and grant holders informed by memo.

Start-up Fund 2002/2003: Final reports should be sought, at the same time informing grant holders that all funding should be spent by the end of September 2005.

Emergency Fund (only ran in '03/04): outstanding balances should be drawn back, accounts closed down and grant holders informed by memo. It was clarified that in the case of overspend on these accounts, it is up to the PI or Department to repay the funding from other sources.

Maintenance Fund (ran for 5 years to '03/04): outstanding balances should be drawn back, accounts closed and heads of department informed by memo.

RS/04-05/42 Research Committee Funding – Start-up/ Incentive Schemes

Doris Alexander presented redrafted guidelines for both the Research Incentive and Start up Grant Schemes. The opening sentence for both schemes should read as follows:

“The purpose of these schemes is to help people move towards gaining external funding”.

Start-up Fund for New Lecturers

A deadline of 15 April 2005 was agreed on for applications to this scheme. A maximum grant of €20,000 was also agreed on, with a caveat that a higher amount may be awarded in exceptional cases, if the funds are available. All expenditure should be finished by September 2006.

Suggested wording with regard to sign off for the proposals was agreed on as follows: “We require sign-off from Head of School or Budgetary Unit to indicate if your application fits in with the Research Strategy of your unit. Please also feel free to indicate how it fits in with the overall College strategy, if appropriate”.

The problem was raised that an applicant’s entry in the Research Support System might run to numerous pages, and be difficult to evaluate. However, it was decided that the whole entry should be included with an application.

In contradiction to a decision of the last meeting, it was decided that applicants would be asked to provide a 1,000-word, 5-yr Research Plan. Some members felt that this was an invaluable way of encouraging new lecturers to meet with their Head of Department and discuss their research aspirations. It was agreed that the Start-up Fund for New Lecturers could be launched, once the above alterations to the guidelines had been made.

Action: Valerie Smith, Research Office to set up special e-mail account for receiving applications to internal Research Committee funding schemes.

Action: DA to launch scheme.

Research Incentive Grant Scheme

A deadline of 1 April 2005 was agreed on for applications to this scheme. A maximum grant of €5,000 was also agreed on, with a caveat that a higher amount may be awarded in exceptional cases, if the funds are available. All expenditure should be finished by December 2005.

There was much discussion about whether this funding could be used to ‘buy-out’ teaching time. The conclusion was that this should not be mentioned in the guidelines as eligible expenditure, but that it would be allowed, if accompanied by a letter from the Head of Department agreeing to this.

It was also agreed that internal funding should not be included in the ARAM, but should all be channelled through self-financing accounts. Head of Department sign-off should not be required for this scheme.

Action: DA to launch scheme.

RS/04-05/44 Research Committee Funding – Possible ‘Interdisciplinary Scheme’

The DoR gave an overview of his proposal for a possible third Research Committee funding scheme. He proposed an interdisciplinary scheme, aimed at groups, preferably in different schools, with the emphasis on infrastructure. Much discussion ensued.

One suggestion was that the funding should be given to schools/budgetary units, rather than to individuals or groups, although the committee disagreed on this. Another was that groups within the same school who haven't worked together before should be encouraged to do so. 'Mutli-disciplinary' proposals would also be allowed, whereby infrastructure, but not necessarily research, would be shared between two groups. There was a suggestion that it be used for PRTLTI proposal preparation, but this was seen to be unfair to those who will not be in a position to apply for PRTLTI funding, and indeed not feasible as we do not yet have a call for proposals issued by the HEA. The funding should be used to develop new, broad areas of research with a potential for collaboration.

On a practical note, it was seen to be important that each proposal should have a 'lead' school, who would administer the funding. It was also important that the funding be used as quickly as possible, and an expenditure date of December 2005 was agreed on.

There was a lot of discussion about how prescriptive the guidelines should be about eligible expenditure of the funding. There was a difference of opinion as to whether the funding would be allowed to fund research personnel, although it was agreed that if this was allowed, it would have to be for a maximum of four months. Other suggestions were for equipment, software, data analysis of existing datasets (rather than development of new datasets) and web development. The decision was reached that the guidelines should not be made too prescriptive, but rather should state that the funding can be used to fund 'physical and intellectual infrastructure'. The onus would be on the applicants to make the case for using the funding as they wished, but the emphasis should be on demonstrating that this could lead to new synergies. This scheme should be open to applications from new or existing groups.

Action: DA to prepare guidelines for this scheme, for further discussion and approval at the next Research Committee Meeting.

RS/04-05/45 Reorganisation in relation to research activities, particularly research centres

There was a lot of discussion about how Research Centres will be featured in the ARAM. The suggestion is that in terms of the ARAM, Research centres should be 'invisible'. The costs associated with running the centres would be allocated among the schools involved in the centre in a pre-agreed proportion, but in return, each school would receive directly proportionate credits for students. The proportional distribution of the costs and credits would be set out in a letter signed by the Heads of Schools, and the Director

and Chair of the Centre. This arrangement would be for ARAM purposes only, but the centre would in reality remain a separate cost centre.

PL agreed to proof both documents provided on this topic, to come up with a document which would be presented, via the Dean of Research, to the ARAM group. A final document would then be prepared, for approval at the next Research Committee Meeting, ready from there to go to Board.

Action: PL to proof both documents, and to prepare a single document.

RS/04-05/46 Research Institutes & Schools Research Liaison Committee

This will be discussed at the next Research Committee Meeting, following the Research Centres Forum, which will take place on 3 March 2005.

RS/04-05/47 Report on research income and expenditure

All members were given a copy of the TCD 'Analysis of Recurrent Expenditure and Research Accounts' (Green Book) for their information.

RS/04-05/48 ARAM-based Interdisciplinary incentives

There was a suggestion that interdisciplinary postgraduates students would receive more weighting in the ARAM. Some problems were raised in relation to this, such as how to prove that a student is interdisciplinary, and also how to prove that having an interdisciplinary student costs more than a student from a single discipline. It was agreed that this suggestion would need to be sent to the Bursar, rather than discussed by at the Research Committee.

Action: RS to prepare a non-technical memo, which should be circulated for the next Research Committee Meeting.

AOB

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 2.00 p.m. on 16 March 2005.

Signed:

Date: