



Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences

Department Leadership Team Meeting

Minutes

Date: Wednesday 11th May 2022

Part 1 Attendees;

Mike Burton (Head of Department)
Ann Webb (Deputy Head of Department)
Helena Gittins (Deputy School Operations Manager)
Cathy Walton (Chair of EDIA committee)
Katie Joy (Chair of Widening Participation committee)
Bart Van Dongen (Discipline Head of Education)
Gordon McFiggans (Discipline Head of Research)
David Topping (Line Manager)
David Schultz (Line Manager)
Jon Pittman (PGR director)
Luis Garcia-Carreras (Employability)
Carl Jackson (PS Safety)
Rob Gardham (PS PA)
Alison Smigova (PS Tech)
Cathy Hollis (standing in for Mads Huuse)
Rob Sansom (Forum Chair)

Apologies; Mads Huuse (Line Manager), Rhian Jones (Admissions), Russell Garwood (IT Director), Scott Heath (Line Manager), David Polya (Line Manager)

Summary Actions

ACTION: Attach quotation for the work in 2.79/G.33 to DLT May Minutes (AS/RJG)

ACTION: Contact Line Managers in advance of each DLT to cascade request to their staff: Are there any problems/comments they would like to raise at DLT (RJG)

ACTION: Plan REF celebration event (RJG/HG/MB)

ACTION: Progress with preparation for the External Advisory Board (LGC)

ACTION: Advertise for new DHoE on or around 1st June (MB)

ACTION: Write a short summary comparing what support staff do in FBMH that EES academics currently do (CW)

Matters Arising

The minutes from the previous meeting were confirmed.

HoD Introduction and report

Mike Burton (MB)

Recruitment is underway with 6 of 26 candidates shortlisted for the Global Ecology Lecturer position. All staff are invited to attend the research seminars to offer feedback.

Zhonghua Zheng is in the process of obtaining a visa for the Data Science Lecturer position.

To swap around Rooms 2.79 and G.33 will now cost around £26,000 + VAT. MB requested DLT's opinion on this expenditure. A breakdown on costs was agreed would be useful before full committal.

The DLT wished to highlight of the Directorate of Estates, that progress on 2.79/G.33 has been made slow and expensive compared to what it might be.

ACTION: Attach quotation for the work in 2.79/G.33 to DLT May Minutes (AS/RJG)

8356 New Teaching Room Williamson 2.79 & G33

Tender Adjudication & kone		Novus	
	Constructions works (flooring/painting/new wall/doorway/lighting/ceiling repairs) to 2.79.	23,127.40	
	Provisional sum - power to auto dr & lectern	inc	
9.02	Provisional sum - lecturers desk	excluded	
15.00	Decorations - G33	excluded	
	Adjusted tender amounts	23,127.40	
	Auto door - kone quote (make door DDA compliant)	2,332.96	
	Provisional sum - painted pattress for motor	100.0 0	
	Provisional sum - remove door latch	50.0 0	
	Total	25,610.36	
	Plus VAT	5,122.07	
	Grand total	30,732.43	

It was also confirmed that the university will pick up IT/AV costs.

KJ suggested a reporting structure for identifying issues to come from staff via line managers to DLT.

ACTION: Contact Line Managers in advance of each DLT to cascade request to their staff: Are there any problems/comments they would like to raise at DLT (RJG)

It was suggested to have a celebration event soon for the REF results within the Department.

ACTION: Plan REF celebration event (RJG/HG/MB)

Reports – please refer to grouped report handout

Recruitment & Admissions Update

Rhian Jones (RJ)

Report submitted

Student numbers are looking very solid, especially for NPEC.

A concern over IELTS has arisen that the English language courses in China could look to be cancelled, which would affect Chinese students arriving here to study.

Employability Update

Luis Garcia-Carreras (LGC)

ACTION: Progress with preparation for the External Advisory Board (LGC)

Teaching and Learning

Bart Van Dongen (BVD)

Report submitted

Please see report for further details.

ACTION: Advertise for new DHoE on or around 1st June (MB)

PGR Report

Jon Pittman (JP)

Report submitted

Please see report for further details.

Director of Research

Gordon McFiggins (GM)

Report submitted

GMC updated on the REF results (officially to be released 12th May) and the overall outcome was very positive.

There was a discussion about administrative roles undertaken by academics in the Dept. reducing bandwidth.

ACTION: Write a short summary comparing what support staff do in FBMH that EES academics currently do (CW)

EDIA

Catherine Walton (CW)

Report submitted

There will be upcoming EDIA budget for next year. Suggestions for how to spend or activities to do are welcome, such as getting students involved in EDIA projects.

IT Report

Russell Garwood (RG)

Report submitted

Please see report for information.

PS Update

Carl Jackson (CJ)

Inspections are ongoing throughout Williamson. Some documentation/policies are being drafted to assist staff in EES which will be published soon.

The compressed air had a slight leak and has been taken out of use whilst under repair.

AOB

Due to tight deadlines for exams, the School is supporting GTA support to assist staff. Opinion was sought as to whether GTAs should be allowed to complete marking.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 8th June 2022, 2pm.

DLT Grouped Reports May 2022

5. Recruitment and Admissions

2022 Entry, Undergraduate (UG) Recruitment

I do not have an update on UG application and offer numbers. The Admissions Office is working towards the deadline of 18th May to make all offers and will provide a comprehensive summary after that date.

The deadline for applicants to select their firm choice is 9th June.

We have run two on-campus offer-holder open days, Wednesday 16th March and Wednesday 30th March. Both were at their capacity of 80, including applicants plus their parents / supporters. We added a third event on 11th May, and are expecting 44 attendees (25 students). The events have included taster sessions for applicants, information sessions for parents, and tours of Williamson and the campus.

2023 Entry, Undergraduate (UG) Recruitment

Planning for the University-wide Open Days is progressing (Saturdays 18th June and 2nd July). Planning is being coordinated across FSE by Alison Evans. I am working with Joe Phelan and Jez Lloyd to plan our EES display material. We will have a stand in the Schuster building, and our talks will also be in Schuster. We will work to make a clear link between the talks, and a display within Williamson. A request has gone out to academic staff for help with displays. A new printed EES Brochure is also being prepared for these events.

2022 entry, Post-graduate Taught (PGT) Recruitment

I do not have a new update on UG application and offer numbers at the time of writing this report.

Rhian Jones, Admissions Tutor

6. Employability Update

No updates.

7. T&L Update

Discipline head of education (DHeO) report for DLT meeting May 2022

Below is my report for the Teaching and Learning meeting that was on Monday.

Semester 2, fieldtrips and exams. Semester 2 teaching has almost finished and the April fieldtrips all went well. These fieldtrips are incredibly important and have caused a massive boost in morale among the student cohort. Thanks to all involved to make this such a success. On-campus, invigilated examinations will be going ahead as planned and we will follow a staggered submissions of exam as was done in semester 1. Please make sure you stick to the deadlines given and return the marked work on time.

Programme and Unit specs. Updated programme specs, amendments forms and unit specs have been accepted/approved by faculty and are now set for next year. However, this still means that, if required, minor amendments can be implemented. If you feel that this is needed, or if you are not sure if something is classified as a minor amendment, please discuss this with the programme directors /DHoE as soon as possible.

Timetabling 2022/23. The teaching team is currently working with the timetabling team (Tom, Elizabeth and Natasha) to check the first versions of the timetables to see if all data (units) required are included etc. This has proven more complicated than expected and has caused some delay. As soon as this is completed, everybody will have access to check their unit, to give feedback to the timetabling team to make any corrections etc. An important aspect is that we will need to make sure that we have all the information in the timetable by the end of May latest (27th of May) since after that date the information will be handed over to the central team and making changes will be more complicated.

4th year cohort tutor. David Neave has recently accepted the 4th year tutor role for both programmes (MEartSci and MEnvSci). Many thanks to Steve CC for doing a similar role on the MEartSci programme over the last couple of years. Other roles, including the DHoE position, will be advertised in the next couple of weeks.

NSS. Our NSS scores last year were not great, likely (partly) caused by the double whammy of the last cohort from the old degree and covid impacts. This year's NSS has just closed but we sent around a reminder to complete the NSS while most students were on field trips and hopefully having a good time. We had 50% completion before that and soon we will find out what the final completion rates were. We will see from these results the impact of the new degree but this will again be impacted by the pandemic. We have a chance that in the next two years these impacts will be steeply reducing, so we will see a fairer reflection of the degree. We will be asked to come up with a departmental NSS action plan, so we should start thinking about this.

To get things started there are a few areas that we could/should focus on:

- Careful examination of UEQ scores, leading to constructive discussions with staff about what they might tweak to improve things.
- Renewed focus on advisor activity.

- Improved messaging to students and staff on recommended timescales for working on assessment.
- Careful review of the timing and cadence of assessments through each semester. Are we (still) assessing too much? Do we give students enough time to do the assessment (on top of their other commitments)? Maybe making an 'assessment calendar pledge for EART units' to students.
- A new messaging campaign to students, highlighting all the time "this is feedback" "this is the student voice" etc.

Field trip App. Steve B has worked with a telemetry company (and obtained funding from the University) to specify an App that can be used on field trips, with the object of allowing students to be more self-guided, have access to richer content and reduce the amount of printed material required in the field. The App should be finished in 3 months and will be available for anyone to generate their own Field Trip / Tour. The first and main phase will provide a content loader and general platform that will access the 'phones GPS and camera so as to direct and orient students relative to content. The content can be opened through interacting with a map or a list. The object is to increase the ability of students to be self-guided in the field. Any content can be uploaded (video, audio, pictures and text - the text content has to be generated in "mark-up"). The content loader will allow tour owners to create new tours and add any new content they like. Although converting text to Mark-Up is not difficult for the tour owner to do. A 2nd phase is also funded which adds development of a wysiwyg editor for use by the tour owner. 2nd phase also has a more "trick" widget which would allow the content to be overlaid over the camera view of the user's phone. The App will be available for Android and iOS and as content will be downloaded to 'phones does not require an internet connection (mobile signal). If you have any questions please contact Steve directly.

Strategic departmental teaching planning document. Below is a summary of the main outcomes, if there are any updates please report these during the meeting.

Major outcomes and what to do next:

- Item 3 First year assessment discussion. Plans to keep the 40 credit units accepted, which implies that students normally cannot carry over any failed credits in to the second year. There is still a need to check if the flowchart developed is completely clear/covers what is needed.
Action: Bart to discuss with Julian/Mandy to check the flowchart and Mandy to summarize the outcomes in the document. Final documents need to be checked one more time during the next Teaching and Learning meeting and put on blackboard.
- Item 4 Geology with physical geography. Plans related to running of this pathway with Geography, as presented by Neil were discussed. A vote was held with 23 in favour of recommending ending the current pathway (0 against). After discussions with the Head of the School of Environment, Education and Development, it was agreed to stop the pathway. The school/faculty has been updated and the required paperwork has been signed, submitted and where accepted by the faculty.
Action: Brian/Neil to lead the discussion of a potential new pathway based mainly around DEES modules to replace the pathway.
- Item 5 4th year. Plans presented. Parts for External examiner and 4th year cohort tutor were accepted. Topics unit, highlighted during the meeting as being a potential problem, has been discussed and resolved in a follow up meeting afterwards. Now unit specs has been

constructed except for the fieldtrip since we are waiting for confirmation of the unit leader for this new unit. Comment: major additional adjustment was needed see comments above.

Action: Bart to make sure that 4th year cohort tutor post is advertised asap. **Update:** completed. Item closed

- Item 6 Petroleum Geoscience MSc's. Item closed.
- Item 7 MPEC remote. Andrew informed all that the application for NPP1 is with faculty. However, progressing this since the meeting is delayed by slow responses of those involved. Mike is dealing with this and together with Andrew is trying to make sure that we are still on track for a first intake to start in September.

Action: Andrew to update all on the next meeting.

- Item 8 Data science. David T presented the plans and these were discussed. Suggestion to change the existing pathway on the MSc to include 'earth sciences' and include options from the MSc Geoscience programmes was widely supported. The suggestions of incorporation of 'Data science' more widely in to the under graduate programmes seems to be something for the (near) future and will likely need the input from the still-to-be-appointed new lecturer.

Action: David to make sure that the changes on the MSc are properly implemented.

- Item 9 MPEC projects. Andrew presented the plans related MPEC group projects and Associated GTA requirements. Healthy discussion with a broad support to go ahead with the plans.

Action: James/Andrew to make sure the needed programmes/unit amendments are in place. Recruitment of Academics to lead to projects.

- Item 10 Moderation process. We received updated moderation guidelines from faculty that will be used going forward. However this does not include guidelines for internal unit moderation review. We will keep doing what we have been doing so far for this year.

Action: Julian to present updated plans for internal unit moderation review at the meeting.

- Item 11 units with a single academic coverage. Vicky presented plans and these discussed. It has been acknowledged that single cover could potentially be risky and can cause challenges, particularly in emergent circumstances. It has been decided that if an academic responsible for a single thought unit want to split the delivering of the teaching on that unit with another academic that should be supported. However, it was also recognised by many that often this is not a problem that should be resolved by splitting the delivery of the teaching on a unit. It has been agreed that for all units there need to be a clear plan that informs all of (i) how the teaching can be delivered in case of absence and by whom, particularly in short term, and (ii) who would take on the unit coordination responsibilities in case of absence.

Action: Vicky to propose a structure of how to capture the plans related to absence etc for every unit. To be discussed during the available opportunity for feedback.

- Item 12 Teaching out of term time. Plans accepted (23 in favour 0 against). Only sticking point remains the September Earth and Planetary science fieldtrip. As it is now this fieldtrip needs to be back before Wednesday of the first teaching week to allow participation in on campus teaching that day. What **Action:** document need to be changed to reflect this change and put on the T&L part of the blackboard.

- Item 13 Accreditation. Accreditation for the Environmental Science programmes submitted and we are waiting for the feedback. In addition, we are waiting for the new guidelines from the Geological Society (GeoSoc) related to the accreditation of some of the other programmes/pathways.

Action: Tucker to monitor progress of the Environmental Science applications. Brian to lead the submission of the application to GeoSoc as soon as this is possible. **Update:** Environmental science application completed

- Item 14 sustainable development goals (SDGs) in teaching. Vicky presented latest developments related to this and the visibility on the blackboard site.

Action: Vicky to move this forward with eLearning and to speak to Rhian about how the SDGs could be included in our marketing material.

- Item 15 fieldwork inclusivity. Rhodri gave final update. Mental health issues and it is recognised that potential training around this subject (what to do and not to do etc.) would be very helpful.

Action: Rhodri to find out what the possibilities related to this type of training are.

8. PGR Update

Admissions and recruitment:

Latest admissions data: we have so far received 237 applications (56 H, 181 OS), which have converted into 55 offers (16 H, 39 OS), and 27 accepts (8 H, 19 OS). It is mainly overseas offers and accepts that are down compared to this time last year (not just in EES but also in other departments and faculties). The reasons are unclear but may suggest that some staff are unwilling to consider granting as many offers as in previous years.

Most of the funded studentship positions are now completed – for September 2022 starts we have:

- 2 President's Doctoral Scholarship students
- 2 Dean's Doctoral Scholarship students
- Provisionally 5 Chinese Scholarship Council students (pending CSC approval)
- 1 Manchester-Melbourne Dual Award student
- 2 STFC DTP students
- 6 BBSRC DTP students
- 2 EPSRC DTP MADSIM students
- 1 EPSRC DTP student
- 3 EPSRC Aerosol CDT students
- 1 EPSRC iCASE student
- 1 Diamond Doctoral student

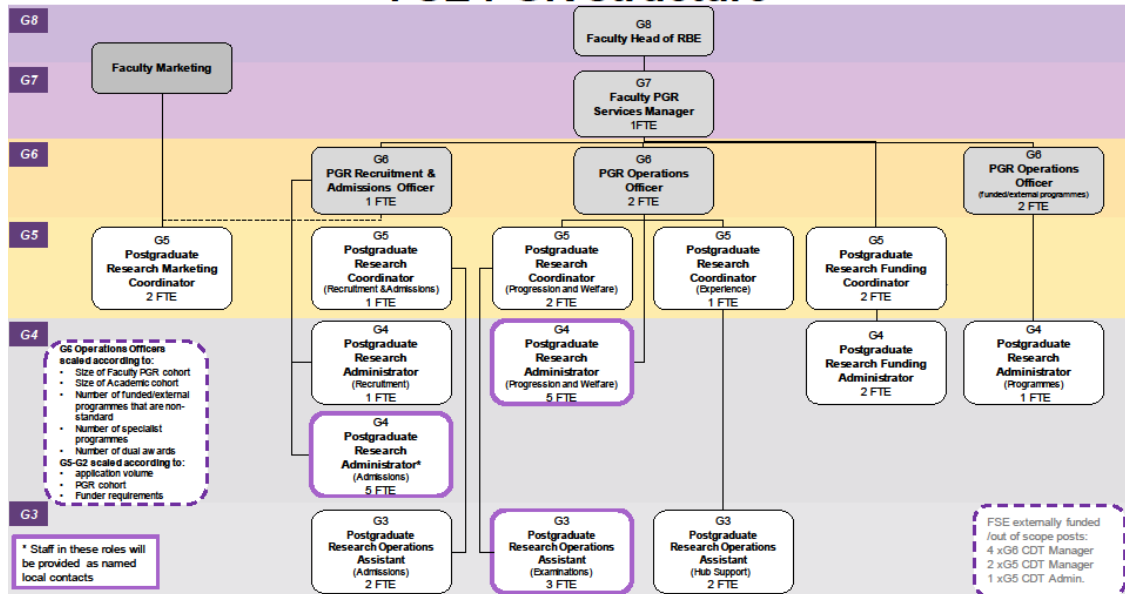
Recruitment to some RWM and industry funded studentships are still on-going.

The nomination deadlines for the second round of the Dean's Doctoral Scholarships and the PGR Teaching Associate Scholarships are next week. Selection panels are in place to identify nominations to submit to Faculty.

SEP PGR updates:

The next steps in SEP structures includes PGR and the consultation has started on the next stage of SEP with the focus on proposals to change organisational structures and job descriptions for PGR teams. More information on the changes can be found [here](#) and details for PGR are [here](#). An overview of the structure changes is shown below:

FSE PGR structure



Updates to NERC DTP and EPSRC CDT calls:

An outline proposal for a potential Greater Manchester focussed NERC DTP3 structure has been sent to MDC strategy group for their opinions, and a meeting is being set up with Colette Fagan and Nigel Hooper. We will be distributing the current document for wider views and asking for details of existing relevant non-academic links from people in order to organise a stakeholder workshop to discuss non-academic partner engagement in the bid.

Plans for some EPSRC CDTs are being developed ahead of the expected call. These include a potential bid around Digital Environment (Dave Topping), GREEN2 (Scott Heath) and Radioactive Waste Disposal and Remediation (Kath Morris).

Jon Pittman

9. Research Update

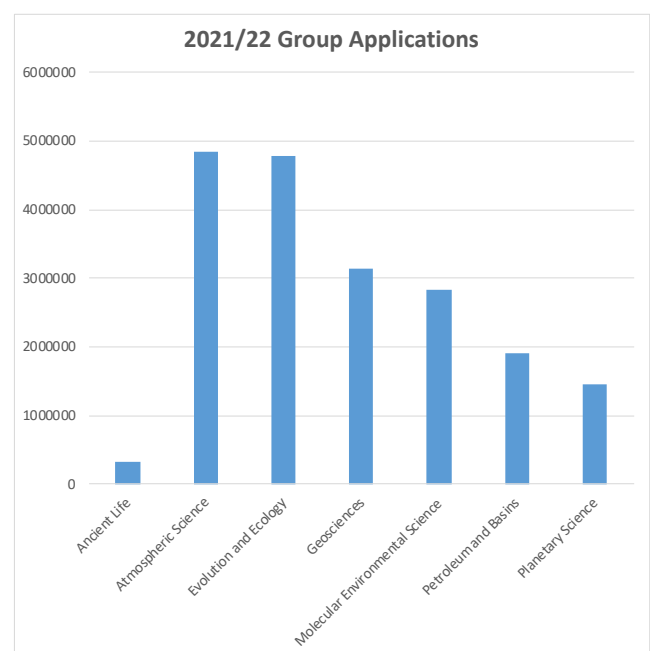
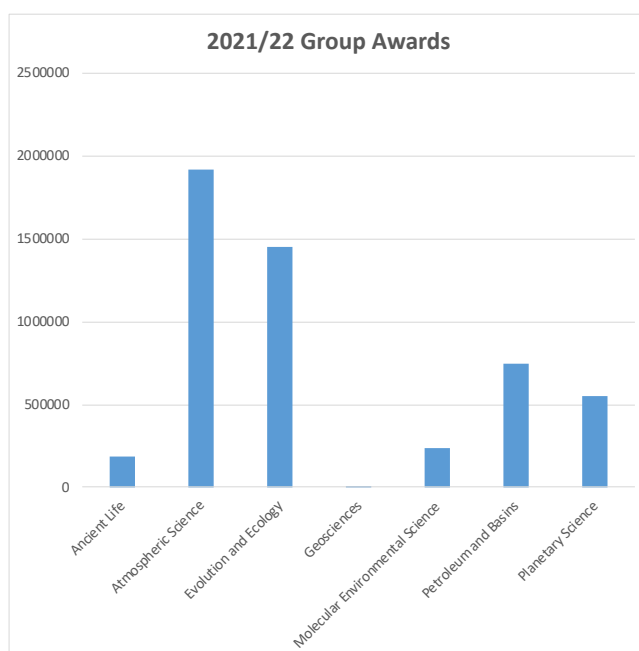
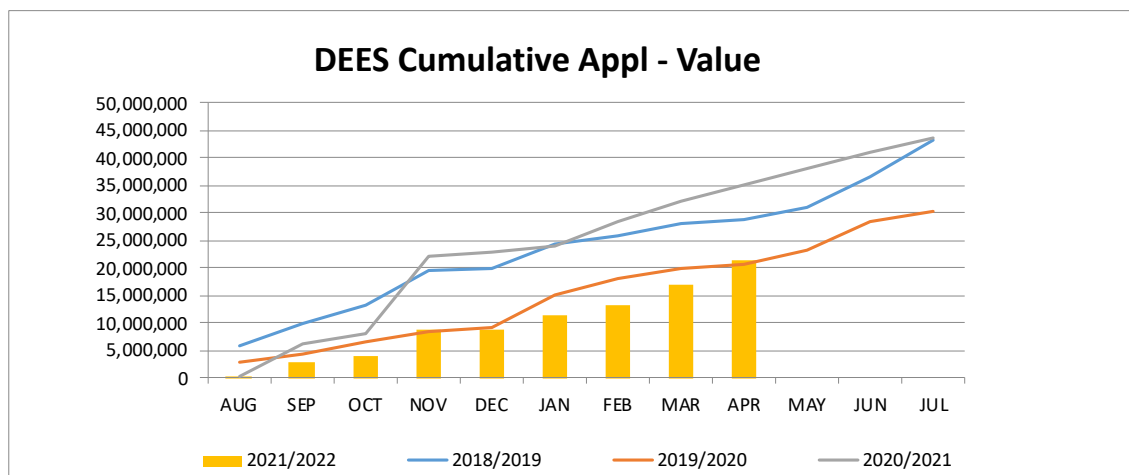
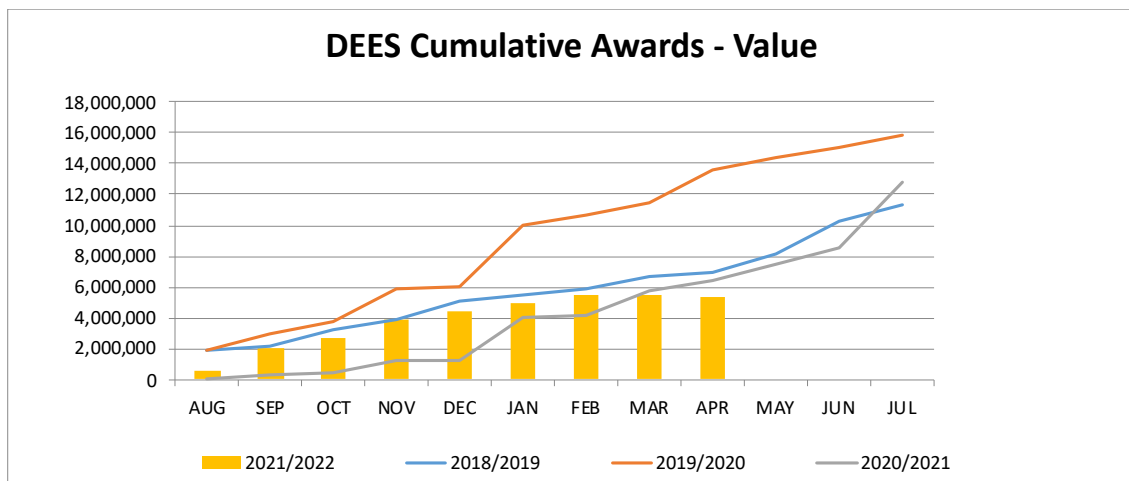
DHoR Report May 2022; 11/5/22 Gordon McFiggans

Little (head of!) research activity since Easter

REF: the embargoed results were sent out Monday 9th May; we have nothing to be worried about, some aspects to reflect on and we should be ready to celebrate our achievements. A verbal briefing (still under embargo) will be provided at DLT with contextual information from across the sector and the centrally cascaded comms strategy; official public release on 12th May.

NERC calls: Pushing the Frontiers – DM applies; internal deadline 16th May, decisions 1st June for submission 19th July. Exploring the Frontiers – notification of intent 10th May for 14th June submission.

Awards and Applications: Funding success has flat lined this calendar year and is falling behind last few years; FSE and SoNS cumulative awards are increasing. Need to watch this – as with last month, FSE and SoNS applications are now above the same point in the last 3 years (even if the awards are lagging slightly), so any recovery elsewhere in the Faculty unlikely to be replicated in DEES.



Applications variable across DEES and awards lumpy but very broadly, highest return where highest value of applications (but remember the lag).

10. EDIA

News From Cecilia Medupin on EDIA workshops. Successfully delivered EDI workshop - Connectivity and Inclusivity in Higher Education - pilot study, last month. And, the follow up to that workshop (part 2) is due to take place on the 15th of June, 10-3pm. All are welcome and Mike Burton endorsed this fully at the departmental forum encouraging all staff to attend. The link to register on Eventbrite is: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/connectivity-inclusivity-in-higher-education-pilot-study-2-tickets-333024213387>

EDIA student training

- Current completion rate for undergraduate students is 50%. My perception on this is that it is very difficult to enforce when there is essentially no way to penalise students for not doing it.
- Discussed at School EDIA meeting and it was reported that the general agreement amongst staff and students was that the student EDIA training is not fit for purpose. The University is therefore developing a new bespoke version of this training that will be introduced to students in September. This will be case study based. Staff were asked the following at the departmental forum (and will be asked again by email) if they can:
 - Identify our most pressing EDIA issues for input into this
 - Ideas for specific case studies (related to labs? group work?) e.g. how to ensure students work in diverse groups

EDIA staff training

There will be a range of training opportunities to be trialled over the next 2-3 months. I hope that details will be sent out soon. This will be organised at the School level. Indicative training is shown below.

- Supporting disabled colleagues and students (physical and mental health disabilities)
- Community building and inclusion training – how do you create a sense of community and how to you create inclusive teams. This one may be especially targeted at people in leadership positions e.g. Heads of Departments.
- active bystander training
- mental health

Seminars by interviewees for academic posts

- This was originally discussed at the departmental forum and was revisited at the departmental forum last week. Mike confirmed that all academic interviewees will be asked to give a seminar as part of the interview process. Also indicated that staff can provide feedback but need to find a mechanism to ensure there is no unconscious bias. Input from other departments was sought through their EDIA leads but no feedback was obtained. In the absence of this the following is suggested.

- Need to ensure that all applicants are informed that the seminar will be part of the interview process in a timely manner
- Need to ensure that all members of the interview panel attend all seminars
- The process for ensuring that staff feedback does not introduce unconscious bias into the interview panel decision was for staff feedback to be collated. But, this feedback was only to be revealed to the panel after they have reached a preliminary decision and ranked the candidates. Staff feedback could play a role if there was a need to choose between highly ranked candidates. This process takes into account the fact that not all staff will attend all seminars and that they will not have access to all the information the panel has.

Student projects in science communication.

Discussions were held at the Teaching & Learning Committee about having some final year projects based on science communication. This is already done by some staff. If further staff want to do this they have the option to do so with local schools that we are already working with. Contacts to local schools can be obtained from Katherine Harrison. The aim here was to leverage student projects (where appropriate and fitting the needs of both staff and students) to augment our engagement with local schools aimed at increasing BAME student recruitment into Earth and Environmental Sciences. Need to make sure that staff are aware of this option for projects. Will consult on perhaps adding something on this to Blackboard.

11. IT Report

- I fed into RLP2 eInfrastructure planning for the next five years with on behalf of EES, highlighting some of our issues as highlighted in the report that I sent to the head of IT as well - hopefully this will shape some of where funding is spent in years to come
- Towards the end of the summer the head of eInfrastructure has offered to visit EES to provide an overview of what the university can provide in this area - which Emma and I think could be really beneficial
- We have had some movement on alternatives to research data storage for supervisors whose students create a lot of data and max out their supervisor's 8TB free limit - they are workable, although not ideal solutions (and this issue came up at the above meeting)
- There is scope to update a number of the research themes on the website, and I have been in touch with Kevin T regarding one of these

(RJG)