NDS Education Committee – 14th Meeting – AGENDA

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| **Date, Time:** | Monday 24th February 2020 @ 11.30 |
| **Location:** | NDS Seminar Room |
| **Telephone call-in number** | N/A |

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| **Attendance and Apologies** | | |
| **Name** | **Attendance** | **Apologies given** |
| Jon Austyn | Y |  |
| Ashok Handa | Y (item 5 onwards) |  |
| Paul Johnson | N | Y |
| Regent Lee | Y |  |
| Simon Knight | N | Y |
| Richard Bryant | N | N |
| Claire Edwards | Y |  |
| Alex Green | N | N |
| Eleanor Wilson | N | Y |
| Srinivasa Rao | N | N |
| Sushma Shankar | N | N |
| Jo Snoeck | N | Y |
| Emily Hotine | Y |  |

**Agenda items**

1. **Welcome and apologies**

Apologies were noted, with thanks

1. **Approval of last minutes**

These were APPROVED

1. **Matters arising from EC 13**

*(2.3) Wolfson Marriot Graduate Scholarship 2019/20*

* JA reported that it had not been possible to nominate a candidate for this scholarship this year. However, Wolfson College has kindly agreed to defer this scholarship to academic year 2020/20.

*(3.4) Draft letter*

* JA reported that this had not yet been written or circulated, but was planned in the near future.

*(5.) Critical reasoning course*

* This matter was postponed until further consideration could be given to the alternative proposal of an experimental design course (see item 8; item 5 on the original agenda).

1. **PGR & PGT admissions – for information**

* JA (as DGS) reported that NDS had offered several PGR places: 3 x DPhil for TT20 ‘early start’; 2 x DPhil for MT20 entry; and 1 x MSc(Res) for MT entry.
* JA also reported that there had been 86 applications for the MSc Integrated Immunology PGT course, with a further 10 received after the January 2020 deadline. 53 applicants had been shortlisted for interview, from whom 28 candidates were offered places for academic year 20/21. A further 6 candidates had been ‘wait listed’ for re-evaluation with all other applicants who applied before the March 20 deadline.

1. **Introduction of part-time (P/T) PGR degrees**

* There was much discussion of this item. JA noted that, at present, a candidate could apply for a P/T PGR degree on the basis of disability, caring responsibilities or other reasons of ‘employment’. However, P/T degrees had not previously been offered routinely by NDS. EH noted that such degrees would increase accessibility, particularly from low income candidates etc. RL suggested this type of degree might be ideal for clinical fellows who were unable to undertake full-time (F/T) PGR degrees.
* It was AGREED and RECOMMENDED that NDS should offer P/T PGR degrees.
* ***N.B.*** *It was further AGREED and RECOMMENDED that all clinical staff who wished to undertake a PGR degree, but who were unable to commit to a F/T degree (e.g. because of 50:50 clinical:research commitments), should enrol in P/T PGR degrees once established. Only clinical staff with ‘protected’ (e.g. >90%) research time that would allow them to undertake a F/T PGR degree would be considered eligible for the DPhil, once P/T degrees were introduced. Any such (F/T) candidate would be asked to provide evidence that they were able to devote >90% effort (or >40 hours per week) to their research, for example a copy of their contract. CE suggested that such candidates should be identified much earlier than at present, in order to guide them through the application process.*
* JA AGREED to liaise with EW and identify the steps needed for the introduction of P/T PGR degrees at the earliest possibility.

1. **DM versus DPhil for clinical research students**
   1. JA reported that he had recently spoken with Jane Dale regarding the ‘new’ Doctor of Medicine (DM degree) which is likely to be introduced in MT21, or perhaps MT20 if possible. Key features of this ‘new’ DM degree are likely to be as follows:
      1. The DM degree is to be considered to be at an equivalent level to the DPhil
      2. There will no longer be a requirement for candidates to have previously received an Oxbridge degree
      3. There would be greater flexibility compared to a DPhil, and particularly a longer timeline to completion (of perhaps 4-5 years, instead of 3 for the DPhil)
      4. The fee for the DM would be benchmarked against equivalent degrees offered by other institutions, but is likely to be lower than the fee for the DPhil
      5. As a ‘supervised research degree’, DM supervisors would be appointed rather than DM ‘advisers’ as in the past
   2. There was much discussion of this item. Conceivably this might be an alternative option for clinicians who wished to undertake a PGR degree but were unable to do so full time. One concern is that, currently, CRFs (for example) are typically appointed for 3 years, after which they resume their clinical appointments full time. Hence it was not clear how such candidates could readily complete a DM degree in a longer period. It was also unclear how such candidates would be funded, if and when the ‘new’ DM degree is introduced.
   3. It was AGREED to defer further consideration of this matter until the DM degree was introduced, and its Regulations had been clarified.
2. **Top up of stipends for research students with competitive funding**

* There had been previous discussion of establishing a maximum ‘cap’ of £25K stipend for ALL PGR studentships. In the absence of JS, further discussion of this was postponed.
* CE suggested that consideration should be given to topping up of ‘basic’ PGR stipends from ~£15K to a higher level, commensurate with that in other departments such as NDORMS or Oncology. JA noted that, if this was implemented, the cost to NDS might be offset but the increased income from the JRAM for each student.
* It was AGREED to ask JS and the Chief Finance Officer, Wanda Groenwald, to model the costs to the department based on the appointment of PGR students over the past 3-5 years, with possible input from EW to identify relevant students.

1. **Experimental design course**
   1. CE and RL had suggested that NDS should establish an ‘Experimental Design’ course in order to make NDS eligible for MRC DTP funding (see EC 13, Agenda item 5). This might, or might not, include elements of the ‘Critical Reasoning/Critical Writing’ course previously proposed by JA (see above).
   2. After further discussion it was AGREED to establish a small working party to consider this further, taking into consideration possible competition from existing courses, and attempting to identify an unmet need that could be fulfilled.
   3. AH agreed to contact 2 or 3 postdocs who had expressed an interest in this type of initiative, as a prelude to establishing a working party.
2. **Listing of potential project titles on NDS website**

* EW has suggested that PIs should advertise the availability of possible PGR projects on the (public) NDS website, before applications for the next rounds of admissions were considered. This would help prospective students more clearly identify potential supervisors, and could increase competition overall. (CE noted that this was done in NDORMS).
* It was AGREED that JA would liaise with EW and endeavour to set this up.

1. **AOB**
   1. Invitation to MSc students from JNDS

RL and AH invited MSc Integrated Immunology students to contribute to JNDS. JA suggested that two or three of the best clinical case commentaries from HT should be submitted for consideration by the Editors. It was AGREED that JA would liaise with EW and arrange this invitation to be sent.

* 1. Representation for MSc in Surgical Science & Practice

It was AGREED that JA should invite the Course Director to nominate a representative to join the Education Committee

* 1. Representation for MSc in Global Surgery

It was AGREED that AH should invite the Course Director to nominate a representative to join the Education Committee

1. **Date and time of next meeting**

It was AGREED that the next meeting should be held in Trinity Term 2020, most probably on a Monday (lunch to be provided). Date/time TBC

**Action points**

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| **Point** | **Person** | **Action** |
| 1-10 | JA | To take discussion to Executive Committee |
| 3 (3.4) | JA/JS | Draft letter to be sent to all PIs from JA/JS and FCH |
| 5 | JA/EW | Logistics of introduction of P/T PGR degrees |
| 7 | JS/WG | Modelling for top up of student scholarships |
| 8 | AH | Lead for establishment of working party for new course |
| 9 | JA/EW | Invite PIs to identify potential projects for 20/21 |
| 10 a | JA/EW | Invite MSc Integrated Immunology contributions to JNDS |
| 10 b | JA | Invite MSc Surgical Science & Practice to Committee |
| 10 c | AH | Invite MSc Global Surgery to Committee |