UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Computer Science
& Technology

Minutes of the meeting of the Post-Doc Forum held at 12noon on Monday 9 May 2016, in Room GC22, William Gates Building

Present: David Chisnall (Chair)
Claire Chapman (Secretary)
Daniel Bates
Salvator Galea
Alice Hutchings
Stephen Kell
Andrea Kells
Andy Rice
Laura Rimell
Caroline Stewart
Noa Zilberman

1. Apologies
Ekaterina Kochmar

2. Minutes of last minutes
The minutes from the last meeting held in Thursday 25 February 2016 were approved.

3. Report on actions from last meeting

I. Amendments to the Guidelines for Mentors
The amendments to the Guidelines for Mentors have been made and the updated version is now published on the Post-Doc Forum Committee website.

II. Regular Social Event
David Chisnall will set up a Doodle Poll to schedule the next Social Tea. It was agreed to remain with the 11:00am start time. Laura Rimell will provide cakes and Claire Chapman will order Tea and Coffee once numbers are known. Caroline Stewart agreed to circulate a plea for new mentors when a social event has been arranged in the hope that they would use this as an opportunity to find out more about being a mentor.

Action: David Chisnall, Laura Rimell and Claire Chapman

III. Mentoring Scheme call out for volunteers
Caroline Stewart circulated an email to lab-ras for potential mentors to come forward, but there has been a low response. It was suggested that Caroline Stewart should circulate an email to PIs to ask if they can suggest mentors and for

them to support and encourage their Post-Docs to take part.

It was felt it may be useful to email Post-Docs an invitation to mentor along with an invitation to the Social Tea. David Chisnall agreed to let Caroline have the date when the social has been organised and she will then circulate an email.

Action: Caroline Stewart and David Chisnall

IV. **Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology Mentoring Scheme**
No action needed.

V. **Intellectual Property Rights information to include on Induction Guidelines**
Andrea Kells provided information on Copyright in software and Research Undertaking Letters. This has been added to the Induction Guidelines Checklist on the web. It was suggested information on Cambridge University Technical Services (CUTS) should be included. CUTS supports staff to undertake consultancy and avoids the University incurring a tax charge on profitable consultancy work. Caroline Stewart will circulate the information to RAs when Andrea Kells has updated the document.

Action: Andrea Kells and Caroline Stewart

VI. **Consensus view on the type of activities an RA should be undertaking in order to apply for promotion to SRA**
Caroline Stewart reported that the due to the varying conditions for each promotion case to SRA it could be misleading to provide specific local CL advice.

It was suggested that instead it would be helpful to provide a series of anonymous case studies of RAs who have been promoted to SRA. Caroline Stewart agreed to investigate this possibility.

Action: Caroline Stewart

VII. **Mentoring Scheme Database update**
The Mentor and Mentee Forms created by Noa Zilberman were circulated.

It was felt that the Mentor form may not produce helpful results as more clarification might be needed for the questions:

What type of advice can you provide? Please tick all that apply
Cultural advice
Moving to the UK

There was the view that it may be helpful to be more specific e.g.

Cultural advice (religion)
Moving to the UK (bank account, NHS etc.)

Following discussion it was agreed that we should trial the form as it is for 6 months. Joanne McNeely would be asked report on its success and if she felt it

helped the matching process. If necessary, amendments to the form can be made.

It was proposed that feedback on mentors be part of the probation evaluation. This was rejected because the PI is not the right person to receive the feedback (they may have a conflict of interest if the mentor has been helping with conflicts with the PI). The eventual consensus was that mentors should encourage their mentees to provide verbal feedback directly to Joanne McNeely if any problems arise. It was also suggested to advise them that they should meet with Joanne McNeely after 6 months to report on how useful their mentoring has been.

It was reported that many RAs did not feel they had had a satisfactory probation process and had not been invited to a meeting prior to probation being approved. It was suggested *'This form should be completed at the Probation Meeting'* should be added to the probation form and also to include local advice on the CL personnel webpage. Andy Rice and Caroline Stewart agreed they should meet to discuss probation further and identify ways to improve the process.

Action: Caroline Stewart and Andy Rice

VIII. Committee Membership
David Chisnall welcomed new member Mr Salvator Galea from the Systems Research Group to the meeting.

It was noted that no members represent the Rainbow, Digital Technology or Artificial Intelligence Groups and a member from each of these groups will be recruited.

Action: David Chisnall

IX. Circulation of Minutes
The previous minutes of the Forum have been circulated to lab-ras.

4. Appraisal Data Information
A new Staff Appraisal process has been started in the Lab and information has been sent to post-docs who have been in post for 2 years or more. From discussion in this Forum and with PIs it has been agreed that post-docs would be appraised by someone other than their line manager.

5. Committee Leadership and Strategy Development Training
Alice Hutchings agreed to attend the Development Training session and report back to the Forum.

6. Departmental Postdoc Committee Chairs Network
Alice Hutchings will also attend the Chairs Network and report back to the Forum.

7. Formal Academic Mentoring Scheme – recruit of Academic Mentors.
Details of the scheme has been circulated to PIs.

8. **Travel Funds for RAs**
    There is currently no Department travel funds available to Post-Docs. It was reported that travel funds for Post-Docs are costed into initial grant applications. Typically travel is costed for 1 PI and 1 RA for each grant. It appeared to be a common problem that Post-Docs were only able to attend conferences that were directly associated with the grants on which they are employed. It was agreed that attending field-relevant conferences is an important part of Post-Doc career development, even when not presenting work relevant to their current grants, and it was felt that this restriction on funds had a negative effect on some members of staff's personal professional development.

    Various views were discussed. It was agreed that Andrea Kells should ask Professor Hopper if he would be willing for the Industrial Supporters Club funds to also be used to support unestablished research staff travel (for PPD purposes) as well as to support research students. It was reported there may also be ways of securing industrial funding specific for post-doc travel. Andrea Kells will also ask Professor Hopper if there would be the opportunity to use the small University Travel Fund for UTOs to cover research staff travel.

    Action: Andrea Kells

9. **Any other business**
    It was announced that Andy Rice will be on sabbatical leave from Michaelmas 2016 to Easter 2017 and Pietro Lio' will be taking over as Researcher Developer Co-ordinator and will attend future meetings.

10. **Date of next meeting**
    To be held in Michaelmas Term and a date to be arranged by Doodle Poll.