

Update: Royal Statistical Society

September 2017

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on behalf of Guy P. Nason, Vice President, Royal Statistical
Society



Some Possible Items of Interest for Academic Colleagues

- AAAG Membership
- Response to Consultations
- Bond Review of Knowledge Exchange
- Liaison with RCUK, particularly EPSRC
- Working with the Council for Mathematical Sciences (CMS)



Membership of RSS Academic Affairs Advisory Group (AAAG)

- Guy Nason (Chair)
 - Olivia Varley-Winter (RSS)
 - Steven Gilmour, Fiona Matthews, Emma McCoy, Claire Miller, Natalie Shlomo, Charles Taylor.
 - John Aston (COPS), Ian Dryden (Heads of Departments of Mathematical Sciences).
 - AAAG has breadth of disciplinary experience & geog. coverage.
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- John Kent taking over from Alastair Young as RSS Honorary Officer Publications/Journals, January 2018.
 - Deborah Ashby taking over from David Spiegelhalter as President from January 2019.



Response to consultations

- RSS responds to 25 to 30 consultations / Inquiries per year, all published on website (e.g. www.rss.org.uk/higher-education-policy)
- Two significant ones of interest to academics:
 - Our response to the TEF Year Two technical consultation was overall fairly negative. Government should probably `think again' (submitted mid-2016)
 - Contributed to and coordinated CMS response to the Stern Review of the REF (submitted Aug 2016): this was more positive. Was pleased to engage this year with further detail of the changes



TEF consultation outcome

Submitted August 2016. Collaborative, input from many RSS Fellows.

Since then . . .

- much media coverage (Times, Guardian, THE)
- used in House of Lords debates
- UK Statistics Authority wrote to Dept. for Education asking them to work with ONS and RSS
- science, research and university bodies have invited discussion, for the future of TEF



Review of Knowledge Exchange in Mathematical Sciences

Review of Knowledge Exchange in the Mathematical Sciences, launched by Council for Science & Technology, EPSRC and Innovate UK's Knowledge Transfer Network.

RSS involvement:

- encouraged statistical responses to the Review and used its publicity channels to solicit them (apparently, the number of statistical responses has vastly exceeded those from other areas of mathematical sciences).
- (at least) two RSS Fellows, David Leslie and Jeremy Oakley, are on the review committee.
- RSS AAAG submitted a brief response (August 2017). Key point was 'not enough people in the pipeline' at all levels.



Scottish Funding Council: Research Cost Weightings

- Scottish Funding Council (SFC) uses 1.2, compared to 1.6 in the rest of the UK, to allocate funds to Scottish universities as a result of monies owing from REF.
- RSS worked with the Edinburgh Mathematical Society and CMS to raise the issue: an article on RSS's Statslife website (<https://www.statslife.org.uk/features/3535-maths-science-research-needs-a-level-playing-field-in-scotland>) and also an article in Research Fortnight.
- SFC is currently reviewing these weightings, so let's hope for a positive outcome.



Liaison with RCUK, particularly EPSRC

- Academic Affairs Advisory Group: meets regularly with RCUK staff (e.g. recently EPSRC).
- RCUK Statistics and Applied Probability Landscape Event (Sept 2016) STAPLE.
 - “bring together representatives from the Statistics and Applied Probability community to investigate the connection between fundamental Statistics research and its applications”
 - Outcomes: (i) increase capacity in this area; (ii) “build connections between work on uncertainty, big data, modelling and inference with applications”
 - Report is available online at EPSRC website.



Council for Mathematical Sciences Highlights

- Still have major concern about EPSRC DTP studentship allocation': possibly not gone well for math. sciences.
 - EPSRC made very aware of the level of concern.
 - CMS and EPSRC collected separate datasets, but picture not clear. Keeping a watching brief.
- Discussed possible future CDT themes with EPSRC.
- Supported and endorsed Smith Review of post-16 Maths.
- Suggested to EPSRC to provide routes to funding for mathematical sciences to the Global Challenges Research Fund. This liberated EPSRC funds to organise joint ICMS and Isaac Newton Institute workshop.

