

Blizard Research Committee (BRC)

Monday 13th February 2023, 2.00 pm, Large Cloud and MS Teams

MINUTES

Present:

Prof William Alazawi (WA)	Prof Silvia Marino (SM)
Prof Mary Collins (MC)	Dr Natalie McCloskey (NM)
Carlos De Oliveira (CDO)	Prof Mike Philpott (MP)
Prof Xavier Griffiths (XG)	Prof Denise Sheer (DS)
Prof Kenny Linton (KL)	Susanne Bell (SB)

Part 1: Preliminary items

1. Apologies for absence

Dr Neil McCarthy (NM)

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The BRC approved the minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 10th January.

3. Matters Arising

None

Part 2: Agenda Items

4. Major bid prioritisation

- MC met with Centre Leads and Centre Research Leads to discuss a strategic approach for applying for major bids with charities.
- CB said that it is beneficial to take ideas to external review panels and to talk to the charity early on to ask for their help in shaping bids.
- WA added that if a charity does not want a particular bid, to then present it to a different charity.

5. UKRI trends

- MC met with Dr Bryony Butland, the newly appointed Director of Research Innovation.
- Bryony previously worked at UKRI and MC is keen to arrange a meeting with her to discuss funding opportunities with UKRI. This could take place in the Perrin and include Dentistry and Wolfson. **ACTION CDO/SB**

Part 3: Standing Items

5. PGR Report

- Four students have had vivas and been successful, but not yet awarded.
- Two new students started in January, and three to start in March and April.
- The deadline for the MRC DTP for translational medicine is in two weeks.
- February 2023 round of the PGRF Feb – 6 applications submitted.
- The Staff-Student Liaison Committee still need a rep from NST and CBCR. KL suggested we have a rep from SBBS and Dentistry for their students in the building.
- The FMD Graduate Studies Committee is putting together advice for students, supervisors, and progression panels on the progression points.
- KL would like to investigate offering statistics training for PGR students.

6. Grant Report

- CDO presented figures of the grants report for January 2023.
- Appear to be coming out of the dip, but not yet back to the levels of 2018/2019.
- CDO is analysing the spread of awards amongst centres and number of applicants.
- SM feels it would be good to know where, as an individual, you stand in comparison with general current Blizzard trends.
- WA has noted that attendance at whiteboard sessions have dwindled, and the most recent unsuccessful bids did not go to a whiteboard session. CDO will send a reminder to staff.
- MC told the committee that they have identified new appointees who have yet to secure a grant and have invited them to a session to discuss ideas.
- The BRC recognised that the number of PGR students per academic needs to increase.
- MC asked that WA and CDO to compose an email to the Blizzard with an update on grant funding and actions the Blizzard are taking. **ACTION WA/CDO**

7. Overspend on grants

- None reported

8. Honorary Staff Appointments

- The committee approved five of the seven applications submitted.
- The BRC queried one application as it was not clear who holds the project licence.
- The BRC rejected one application as the proposed supervisors do not have substantive contracts and are honorary.

9. Recruitments in progress

- NM updated the committee. Professor and Reader in infectious Diseases is still with HR.
- Senior clinical lecturer in metabolism will be interviewing soon.

10. Fellowships / Major Grant Initiatives

- The Wellcome Trust has a funding round for improving research culture up to £1M. This has gone through Andrew Livingstone and WA will take to Amrita Ahluwalia.
- Two bids have gone forward for MRC centres of excellence. WA will update the committee when these bids have been submitted.

Part 4: Other business

11. Any other business

- MC updated the committee on appointments to the External Advisory Board – Alison Simmons, University of Oxford; Wendy Bickmore, University of Edinburgh; and Paul Gleeson from ICH. Their first visit in October will be for one day with talks from centre leads or research leads on a theme (e.g. East London Genes) and WA could present some statistics. WA suggested inviting representatives from the hospital to highlight collaborative research.
- MC reported that the Protein Perspective Day, organised with colleagues from SBBS, was an excellent meeting.
- WA raised the issue of lab archives at the recent faculty research strategy board meeting. It has faculty agreement and is now with procurement. It will be discussed at the next faculty level meeting next week.
- MC suggest appointing a review panel for laboratory infrastructure.
- CB provided an update from the horizon scanning group – there was good attendance with everyone appraised of current equipment. They have an equipment to pitch to centre leads, which they want to have bid ready. CB met with Amrita Ahluwalia who is keen to appoint an equipment lead for each institute.
- MC said that microscopy needs an uplift and looked at strategically. One of the new recruits in neuroscience will need their own microscope.

Date of the next meeting: 13 March 2023

Outstanding action list

Meeting date	Ref	Action	Person Responsible	Deadline	Outcome
11/11/22	5	Write the Blizard's own archives policy after reading the faculty's policy and inform staff on what they should be doing.	BRC	Next meeting	Ongoing
10/10/22	3	Suggest external advisors who can sit on a Blizard external advisory board.	BRC	Next meeting	Completed
10/10/22	3	Organise a 'Blizard Day' event to take place in the next few months to celebrate achievements and the latest research, education updates and new innovations.	NM/CDO	Next meeting	Ongoing
11/11/22	10	Present update on recruitments in progress at every BRC meeting.	NM	Next meeting	Completed
13/02/23	5	Arrange meeting for Bryony Butland to present update on funding opportunities with UKRI. Invite Dentistry and Wolfson and hold in the Perrin.	CDO/SB	Next meeting	
13/02/23	6	Send an email to the Blizard with an update on grant funding and actions the Blizard are taking.	CDO/WA	Next meeting	