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Professor David Delpy FRS
Chief Executive
EPSRC
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2 August 2011

Dear David

EPSRC FELLOWSHIPS

We are writing to you in connection with the EPSRC's announcement on 22 July of new arrangements for Fellowships, across its entire remit

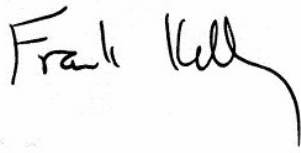
(<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/other/EPSRCFellowships%E2%80%93A%20New%20Approach.pdf>). Our particular concern is with the mathematical sciences.

The Council for the Mathematical Sciences (CMS) welcomes EPSRC's engagement with recommendation (R9) of the International Review of the Mathematical Sciences (IRMS) that special attention is needed for statistics. We therefore welcome the increased support for fellowships in statistics and applied probability. Nevertheless, we are seriously concerned at the exclusion from Fellowship support of all areas of mathematical sciences apart from statistics and applied probability, particularly at the postdoctoral (PDF) level. We request that EPSRC urgently reconsiders this decision.

As we discussed with you in March, UK graduates are at a significant disadvantage in the mathematical science academic job market. The UK benefits greatly from the number of talented mathematical scientists who move here to take up academic positions but (as noted in the IRMS) the situation is fragile and poses a serious risk to our future national standing, and also to our continued ability to educate the number of under- and post-graduates needed by employers. You will be aware that this issue is much more of a problem in mathematical sciences than other disciplines in EPSRC's remit because of the very low numbers of postdoctoral positions funded (3.8% of EPSRC-funded postdoctoral positions were in mathematical sciences as of March 2009) and the relative paucity of alternative sources of funding. Postdoctoral Fellowships are a crucial source of funding for the most talented young researchers in all areas of the mathematical sciences, many of whom may not have the luxury of waiting until the next round of fellowships.

Fellowships at the postdoctoral level provide a rare opportunity for the future leaders of the discipline to develop independently, and the loss of these fellowships to the general area of mathematical sciences will hit the best young mathematicians disproportionately. This appears to have been recognised in physics, where the remit of the PDFs has been kept general. We urge you to reverse this decision for the mathematical sciences at the earliest opportunity; it is still not too late to open up the current call at the PDF level.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Frank Kelly in black ink.

Professor Frank Kelly FRS, Chair, Council for the Mathematical Sciences

Handwritten signature of Michael Walker in black ink.

Professor Michael Walker OBE, President, Institute of Mathematics and its Applications

Handwritten signature of Angus Macintyre in black ink.

Professor Angus Macintyre FRS, President, London Mathematical Society

Handwritten signature of Valerie Isham in blue ink.

Professor Valerie Isham, President, Royal Statistical Society

Handwritten signature of Penny J. Davies in black ink, underlined.

Dr Penny Davies, President, Edinburgh Mathematical Society

Handwritten signature of Richard Eglese in black ink.

Professor Richard Eglese, President, Operational Research Society

c.c. Philippa Hemmings, Lead, Mathematical Sciences Capability Delivery, EPSRC

c.c. Lesley Thompson, Director, Research Base, EPSRC