

# AGP update to Astroforum Feb'15

Ian Smail (AGP Chair)

with input from Daniel Brown (deputy-chair), Colin Vincent & Kim Burchell

- Process and changes in 2014/2015 calls
- Summary of 2014 applications
- 2014 outcome
- Funding trends
- Gender success rates of PI/co-I
- Summary

# Process + Changes

- **2015:** Deadline: February 12 (process compressed so can announce in Nov).
- **2015:** AGP's call split into two: one in Astronomy Observations and Theory (AO/AT) area and one in Planetary and Solar studies (SS/PL). [rec. by CG review]
- **2015:** Management FEC calculated as multiplier of recommended FTE (10% cap)
- **2014/15:** 10/20 of AGP members have been replaced, including Chair, Deputy-Chair and three of the four sub-panel chairs
- **>2014:** DirAC-II HPC ODI costs transferred to a separate non-AGP line.
- **>2014:** Double the funding for Investigator travel (calculated from the recommended FEC awards).
- **>2014:** Recommend 5% FEC to (13) investigators on Highest Priority projects below the cut-off for PDRA support (and not receiving FEC on a funded project).

However, still a significant fraction of co-I (>30-40%) not winning FEC support. Majority are “research-active” and contribute to the astronomy programme at their institutes. To recognize this AGP proposed to SB to have them named on award letters, but at zero-cost. *This proposal was not supported by SB.*

# 2014 applications received

Statistic	2014	2013	2012	2011
			<b>Bridging</b>	
Number of applications	25	20	27	35
Consortium applications	7	1	2	4
New Applicant applications	10	7	3	2
Number of applicants	262	165	226*	245*
Number of projects	232†	160	196	261
Requested Investigator staff years	161	122	160	207
Requested PDRA staff years	618	421	475	596
Requested Technician staff years	35	27	34	67
Average overbid on PDRA+Tech	2.62	2.8	2.16	2.50
Investigator time/PDRA+Tech time	0.25	0.28	0.28	0.31
Funding requested (£M)	94	53	63	82
Funding allocated‡ (£M)	30.0	26.4	27.9	30.6

\* Includes applicants on bridging grants who reapplied in the 2012 and 2013 rounds.

† AGP assessed an additional 19 projects from RAL, not included in this total.

‡ Includes transfers and/or Wakeham savings.

# Outcomes

**Recommended:** 76.7 RA, 6.5 Tech, 2 PhD, 21.9 FEC across 6 Consort, 22 Consol and 3 NA

Some support for 144 of 262 applicants (~45% get nothing).

RA+Tech award slight increase on baseline (median ratio 1.03, mean: 1.2+/-0.5 for those with existing support).

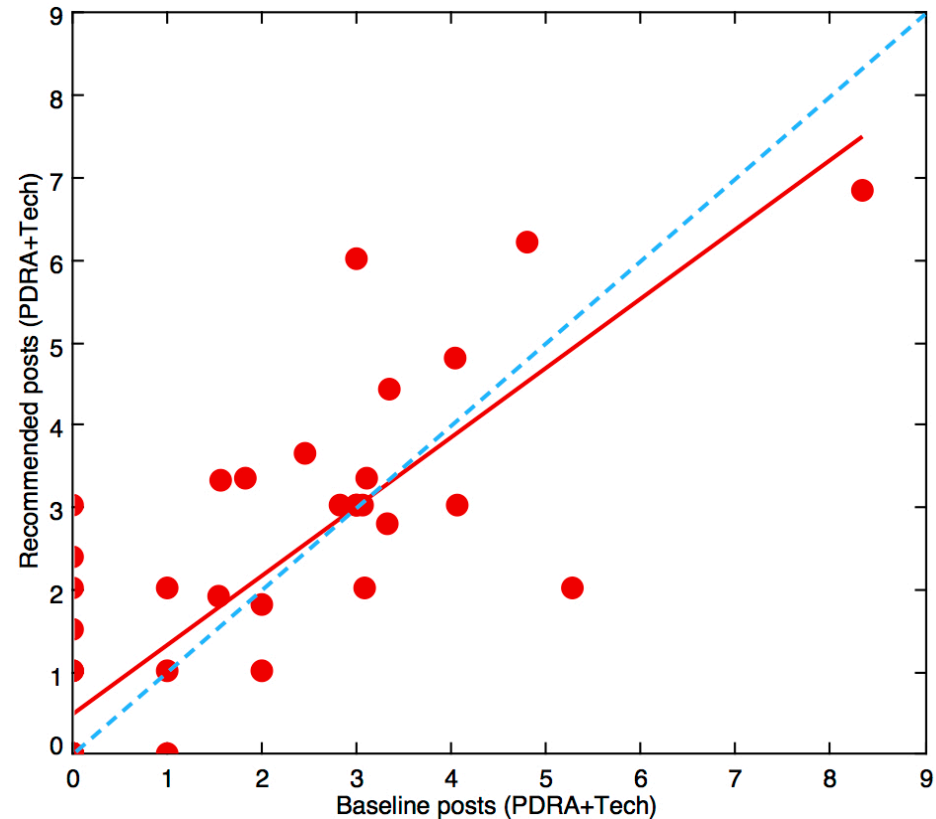
Median FEC award 20% (mean=16%).

Total FEC award level on 2012/13.

Awarded 5% FEC to 13 co-I on FH projects just below PDRA-cutoff.

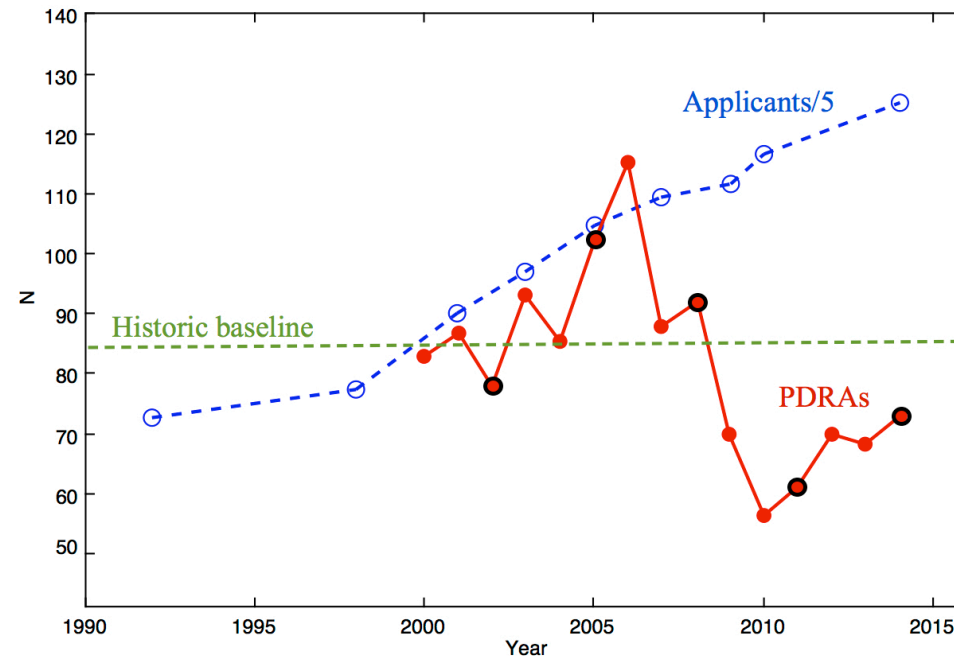
Typical group: 2.5 Ras + 0.4 FTE FEC.

Some "Churn" (dispersion +/-1 RA).



*Number of PDRA+Tech posts recommended in 2014 versus existing STFC support. [11 proposals which came in with zero baseline and got zero recommended]*

# AGP funding trend



*PDRA provided by STFC/PPARC AGP relative to size of the UK's academic research community: ~3% increase p.a. [Applicants line divided by 5, to put on same scale as PDRA].*

Main drivers of growth in “AGP” area:

- New groups in AO/AT (e.g. Surrey/Bath/Lancaster/etc) + expansion of existing groups [new app.] + some migration of maths researchers;
- In SS/PL mostly migration of geologists, atmospheric physicists and some chemists.

# Gender success rates

## Stats - Success rate - gender balance

	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Requested</b>				
Number of Applicants	239	231	163	266
Number of Male Applicants	205	200	141	216
Number of Female Applicants	34	31	22	50
Male % of total number	86%	87%	87%	81%
Female % of total number	14%	13%	13%	19%

## Funded

Number of Applicants	149	140	117	144
Number of Male Applicants	120	118	102	122
Number of Female Applicants	29	22	15	22
Male % of total number	81%	84%	87%	85%
Female % of total number	19%	16%	13%	15%

<b>Male success rate</b>	59%	59%	72%	56%
<b>Female success rate</b>	85%	71%	68%	44%

**AVERAGE: 61% (since 2011) 61±3% (last 3yrs)**  
**AVERAGE: 64% (since 2011) 57±7% (last 3yrs)**

# Summary

- Average **funded** academic receives 16% FEC (~6hr/week of STFC research), but ~40% have zero. Average co-I receives ~0.3 FTE RA (1 year of RA every 3 years).
- Pressure on AGP exploitation funding already recognised by the Programmatic Review – but increased further due to ~10-15% growth of astronomy area (not seen in PP/NP?).
- Good news! STFC's research portfolio expanding – but only if supported by further exploitation funding – potentially under-utilising facilities, including UKSA-missions (e.g. Fundable-High priority-UNFUNDED *HST*, *XMM-Newton* studies).
- 20% increase in grants (£30M->36M/round) would fund additional 45 PDRAs (all Fundable High priority-UNFUNDED) and 10% FEC for ~150/300 currently unfunded co-Is.
- SB did not endorse approach of naming *all* research active co-I's on grants (irrespective of FEC award levels) – need to consider other approaches to broaden support (plus implications for e.g. PhD quota calculations).
- Gender success rate of PI/co-I appears equal, but will be tracked to ensure this is the case (and address any trends).
- Major change in 2015: split AGP call into AO/AT and SS/PL – intended to simplify reviews (fewer interfaces, smaller and more coherent grants).
- Average grant is 2.5 PDRAs and 0.4 FEC – such small awards cannot be exploited “flexibly” – one core motivation of Consolidated Grants. Similarly, larger awards do not benefit from stressing coherence as they have to be assessed in the same way as smaller/less coherent proposals.