

**MaxiMaths-2 Application:
2nd/3rd Operations Research Networking Events, Autumn 2012/Spring 2013**

Proposer: Andreas Grothey, Ken McKinnon

Background: Students of the MSc in Operational Research are required to do a 3-months summer project. They are strongly encouraged to try to secure a project with an external company and attempt to apply their skilled to a real life problem. In fact the project coordinators for the Operational Research MSc (Andreas Grothey - since 2006/07, Peter Richtarik - since 2010/11 and Ken McKinnon - 2002/03 until 2005/06) have always actively contacted companies in the Edinburgh area and beyond to explore possibilities for MSc projects. During these 10 years we have gathered an impressive list of possible contacts (about 150 at the latest count).

This database of industry contacts is an invaluable resource which we feel is currently underused. At the moment the project coordinators will yearly contact every person on the database and ask for possible ideas of MSc projects. A minority will respond positively with an MSc project proposal, the majority will tell us there is nothing this year, but wants to keep in touch.

In an attempt of making better use of this resource we have held an “OR forum” as a networking events for academics and practitioners interested in Operational Research in the Edinburgh area. The idea is to provide a forum where like-minded people can meet, discuss current problems/areas of work, showcase successful applications of OR and (hopefully) set up future collaborations and MSc projects. Note that the main focus is to provide a networking forum. By tighter knitting together the group of academic and industrial OR people in the Edinburgh area we are hoping that more obvious payback to the university (such as MSc projects, industrial funded PhDs or research) will be easier or more natural to setup.

An initial “OR Forum” networking event has been held in March 2012 and was funded as part of a successful Maths Public Engagement funding application. This event had about 25 people (6 industrialists, 9 academics and various PhD students) attending. Feedback, both verbal and in writing has been generally positive and we think that at least two MSc projects have arisen from the event. We are currently in discussion about possible joint PhD funding with a contact that has been made at the event. Despite the relatively low number of attendees, the response to the about 150 invitations has been generally positive, with many more people indicating that they would be interested in such an event, but where unable to make the time.

We envisage that these events should take place roughly half-yearly, so the next events would be held in Autumn 2012 and Spring 2013. The date of Autumn 2012 is just after the end of this years MSc. It is hoped that the timing would enable us to showcase the most successful MSc summer projects from this year. The Spring 2013 event would be at the right timing to setup MSc projects for summer 2013.

This series of networking events is roughly modelled after the successful series of events held by the SFRA (Scottish Financial Risk Academy) in the area of Financial Risk. We feel that there is enough mass to establish a similar series of events in Operational Research.

Purpose: We are asking for funding for the next two OR Forum events to be held in Autumn 2012 and Spring 2013 at ICMS. Each forum will take the form of a 3 hour afternoon/early evening event comprising of short introductory talks, posters and informal discussions. We will aim to secure an attractive UK based keynote speaker from industry or academia to showcase a successful application of OR methodology. The autumn 2012 event will also be used to showcase some successful MSc projects (in the form of posters/short talks). It is in our interest that these MSc project presentations come across as strong as possible. As an encouragement for the students we would wish to be able to give a small amount of prize money to the best MSc student presentation.

We are asking for total funding of £1160, broken down as follows:.

2× ICMS room hire/support (£150 each)	£300
2× ICMS catering (snacks/drinks - £100 each)	£200
2× Invited speaker (£250 each)	£500
Prize for best OR student	£100
Total	£1160