

PSRS AMB-meeting

09/03/2023 at UPEC

Participants :

- Amine Nait-Ali (UPEC)
- Jyrki Saarinen (UEF)
- Carlo Ricciardi (PoliTo) (online)
- Nathalie Destouches (UJM)
- Crane Rogers (UJM)
- Atland Boksi (PSRS student representative at EMA) (online for a short time, for presenting his annual report at EMA)

1°) Feedback on PSRS students

Master2 year, cohort 2021-2023 students

- At UPEC :
 - o Semester 3 results: One student stayed in Finland and followed the courses online, but who has kept up fairly well. Good to great students overall. One student is a bit weaker than the others.
 - o Thesis projects: All the students have internship projects.
- At POLITO :
 - o Semester 3 results: Fair to good results overall, except for one course found to be quite difficult. Overall, students are in the second half of the Italian cohort.
 - o Thesis projects: All seven students found internships. One student is going to Boston, and will therefore lose 3 months of his EMJMD scholarship.
- At UJM
 - o Semester 3 results: Only 3 students, but a great group, they work together well
 - o Thesis projects: All three have found good subjects. Some interns receive stipends, others no.

Master 1 year, cohort 2022-2024 students (S2 UEF and summer internships)

- **The Cohort:** following the interruption of one student in September and the exclusion of one student at the end of semester 1, the group now counts a total of 16 students. We have not had an answer from the student who interrupted regarding a possible return next year.
- **Attitude and behaviour:** Unlike previous cohorts, teamwork, group dynamics and attitude were disappointing in S1. To date at UEF, no teacher has reported attitude problems or complaints, but some curious behaviour on the part of one student.
- Jyrki will pay particular attention to teamwork and work relations during his course and the upcoming projects.
- Regarding **summer internships**, few students have found a host to date.

News of our alumni

Nine of the ten students from the first cohort currently have good positions in relation with their degree tracks. Half of them have started or will soon start a PhD, the other half are in Industry.

Atland Boksi on student participation and as PSRS representative at [EMA](#)

- **Role of helping students and candidates:** update and complements to PSRS student guidebook (tips for before coming and once at UJM and UEF); answering questions of candidates and new students.
- **Communication and visibility of PSRS:** creation of an PSRS students Instagram account, and regular communication on PSRS student activities and relaying PSRS news.
- **PSRS Student life:** organising outings and group dinners, encounters between cohorts and with other students
- **Exchange about 2022-2024 cohort:** M. Boksi confirmed that there was substantially less unity and team spirit in the new cohort. The students did not seem to understand the advantages of working together, sharing knowledge and helping each other out.

2. Plans for next year

Starting dates :

S1 – UJM	Monday 4 September 2023
S2 – UEF	Monday 15 January 2024
S3 – UJM	Monday 4 September 2023
S3 – PoliTo	Monday 25 September 2023
S3 – UPEC	Monday 25 September 2023

Induction week :

From Monday August 28 to Friday September 1st 2023 in Saint-Etienne

- Day 1: Welcome event & speeches, campus visit, short presentation from H. Curien Lab and the Graduate school MANUTECH SLEIGHT; signing student agreements (new cohort).
- Day 2: Meet the city & scavenger hunt; possible research or industrial presentation from machine learning and data science master proposed by master MLDM (new cohort).
- Day 3: 8:00-16:00 Master theses defences (cohort 2021-23); New students (2023-25): Administrative & logistic assistance + Student associations.
- Day 4: Morning: summer M1 internship defences; Afternoon Jury for S4 and diploma. Time of Atland and Francisco with the new cohort.
- Day 5: PSRS programme presentations with full partners. Plan, a time to talk about the diversity of photonics applications and careers. Informal lunch with 2021-23 cohort; PSRS Graduation ceremony (with PSRS diploma supplement).

Times set for parallel sessions of Thesis defences on August 30, 2023 (see slide 9)

- Thesis submission deadline: 22 August
- Submission deadline for summer internship reports: 24 August

New: UJM diploma ceremony

The UJM Sciences faculty plans to have a collective diploma ceremony for all the science master degrees (100 to 150 students + families). Conditions:

- Grades and committee decisions finalized before September 15
- Students must enrol by email (well ahead of time, provide photo and personal info)
- Date and time: the latter part of November, from 13:30 to 17:00 followed by a reception

Agenda : AMB jury and Teaching staff meetings

Meeting on June 12 or 13th (*Crane will send a poll to set the date*)

- Morning : teaching staff meeting of implementing COIL (see below)
- Afternoon : AMB jury meeting for S2 and S3 results

Topic “**Implementing Collaborative online international learning (COIL)**” A rapidly-spreading teaching approach using project-based online activities to enhance collaborative and intercultural competence.

- Idea for 2023-2024 : Implement a COIL project (2 ECTS) as part of the S3 project training modules, between groups of students in our three concentration tracks.
- Idea for the future PSRS 2 : develop COIL projects with other outside partners ?

3. Financial Agreements

Following discussions during previous AMB meetings intended on reduce our operating budgets to set aside funds for scholarships, we have reached an arrangement (c.f.: slides 11-17):

- UPEC, UEF and UJM agree to reduce their budget by 30% to save funds for scholarships
- PoliTo agrees to reduce their budget by 14,5% to contribute to scholarships
- The savings on our operating budgets = 5 or 6 scholarships at 22 k€ (or conditional scholarships starting from S2 only)

PSRS Selection meeting

10/03/2023 at UPEC

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1/ Selection process and criteria

Reminder of the general selection process and criteria

The selection criteria are detailed online on the PSRS website, section “Apply” page “Application assessment and appeal procedure”. Criteria are rated on a scale of 0 to 5, where 5=Excellent and 0=Insufficient, except for English language proficiency, evaluated via various tests complying with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

- All applications are screen for relevance and assessed by a first full partner. Applications getting more than 3/5 after the first assessment are assessed by a second full partner.
- For the first evaluation, a single full partner will assess all applications from a given country, and maximum 10 best students from each country will be selected for the interview stage.
- All applications getting on average more than 3.5/5 after the assessment by two full partners are assessed by the 4 academic full partners.
- All applications getting on average more than 3.5/5 after the assessment by four full partners are interviewed.
- The final grade of each application is the average of the application average grade and the interview grade.
- Final selection is agreed upon during an Academic Board Selection meeting. The representatives of the 4 full-partners must reach a consensus on grade and ranking of the candidates.

Problems with applications and the new recommendation procedure

The authentication of degrees, transcripts, and letters of recommendation is not easy and has often put doubts on certain candidates.

It was decided following the previous selection (2022-2024) to implement a new system by which candidates would provide contacts of referees in their applications, and once they had applied, the referees would then receive an email from our application platform requesting them to answer a few short questions online. This procedure was seen as having two advantages:

- Less risk of fraudulent recommendations
- Easier-to-compare recommendations by using a standard form and set of questions

Unfortunately, there were some difficulties with the platform:

- The automatic emails from the platform were often not received or classified as spam by the referee's provider
- If a student updated his application (i.e. reapplied) after a recommendation had been given, the link between the recommendation and the application was lost (this problem was quickly fixed once it had been identified)
- There were many cases of candidates having made mistakes entering the emails of their referees.
- Because the applications platform is used by other masters that did not opt for our email-to-referees system, there were also fields on the platform destined to receive traditional letters of recommendation, so many candidates used both means of providing recommendations

As a result, we were very tolerant of late letters of recommendation, and wrote to referees to request recommendations for students missing them. We continued to receive and accept recommendations and other documents well beyond the official deadline, but only for applications that had been duly deposited by the deadline of February 6th.

It was agreed that we should plan a time de review the online instructions, and to have Leo make some changes to the application platform.

2/ Data on the population of candidates for the 2023-2025 cohort

This year we received 155 applications, down from 182 valid applications in 2022, among which we count only 4 programme country candidatures plus 2 Pakistani candidates that did their BSc in Hungary and therefore qualify as Programme country applicants *i.e.: a total of only 6 programme country candidatures.*

In terms of choice of concentration track: PoliTo 32%, UJM 33%, UPEC 24%, and undetermined 11%

Data analysis was done on candidature populations for all 4 cohorts, and in relation to the 3 previous selections (see slides 18-19).

- Regions and countries for which we received the most candidates
 - o Nearly 50% of applicants from Eastern Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh...), who represent nearly 50% of our students
 - o About 25% candidates from Sub-Saharan countries of Africa, but only about 10% among our students
 - o About 10% of the applicants are from the Southern Mediterranean region, and nearly 10% of our students also
 - o Regions for which the percentage of students (S) is higher than the percentage of candidates (C) include programme countries (C=6%; S=13%), Western Balkans (0%; 2%), Russia (1%; 6.4%) and Latin America (2%; 8.5%)
- The percentage of women
 - o In previous years
 - In 2020, C=17%, S=36%
 - In 2021 C=17%, S=7%
 - In 2022 C=20%; S=11%

In the 2023 candidates pool, 24.5% women, and a large part of women among the best ranked candidates, according to preliminary results

3/ Selection Results

Reminder that we are limited to a maximum 3 enrolments per country of origin, and that we have 5 programme country and 14 partner country EMJMD scholarships to provide.

Each case was reviewed individually. All criteria and information were considered, with focus above all on 3 considerations:

- minimum level to perform well enough in curricula (i.e. no major gaps, often a factor of difficulties and loss of motivation among students in prior cohorts),
- maturity and motivations (for the program and learning mobility),
- potential for concentration track specialisation.

Applications having received interviews were discussed, particularly regarding highly contrasting scores between evaluators, or with the interview. Selection committee notes and commentary were saved by the evaluators to the shared Excel file. A non-exhaustive set of examples is given below:

The final ranking of all candidates is listed below. Admission results are:

- 5 EMJMD Programme scholarships
- 14 EMJMD Partner scholarships
- 12 reserve-list Partner scholarships with fee-waivers (admitted for self-funding)

Three (3) reserve list candidates without clear indication of track choice, and were left undetermined.