



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Department of Animal and Plant Sciences

Dr Mike Boots

Alfred Denny Building
Western Bank
Sheffield S10 2TN, UK
Tel: 0114 222 0000
Direct Line: 0114 222 0054
Fax: 0114 222 0002
Email: m.boots@sheffield.ac.uk

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Re: Katie Hampson's application for participation in the Mathematical modeling of infectious disease in Africa

Dear Selection committee

I am writing in support of Katie Hampson's application for participation in the Mathematical modeling of infectious disease in Africa and to confirm that I am very happy to act as mentor and to confirm that we will work together in Sheffield after the workshop specifically on models of rabies spread in Africa and more generally on infectious disease dynamics. We are in the process of securing funding for Katie to join my group in October this year. I believe that Sheffield will provide an excellent environment in which Katie can develop as an independent researcher. She will join an expanding group of researchers interested in host-parasite interactions (Boots, Press, Rolfe, Scholes, Siva-Jothy) and theoretical ecology and evolution (Arnsworth, Boots, Ratnieks, Rees) and be well placed to expand existing collaborations within the biomedical sciences and medical school. Animal and Plant Sciences gained the highest possible rating in both the 2001 RAE (5*) and the QAA's TQA (24/24) and has also recently benefited extensively from heavy JIF, Wellcome and SRIF investment, of more than £13M.

Within my own group there is a theoretical postdoc (Dr Steve Webb) examining the role of network structure to the evolution of parasites, another postdoc (Dr Ruth Hamilton) modelling the evolution of the innate immune system, a Wellcome funded postdoc modelling parasite life-histories and the emergence of dengue and two further theoretical graduate students modelling host parasite interactions. In addition Dr Amy Pedersen who's wildlife disease interests nicely complement Katie's has recently joined the group from the US on a Royal Society Incomming Fellowship. There is therefore considerable interest and experience in evolutionary disease theory within the group from which Katie can build upon the skills she will develop at the workshop.

Katie is an outstanding young researcher who has already developed some modelling skills but would clearly benefit from this intensive advanced study institute. This will help her to achieve her ambition of developing into a more rounded quantitative biologist.

Mike Boots
Reader in Disease Biology
University of Sheffield.