MODNET: Newsletter 1
1 January 2005

Welcome to MODNET!

MODNET is a Marie Curie Research Training Network in Model Theory and Applications funded by the European Commission under contract number MRTN-CT-2004-512234. It will run for 4 years from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2008, and is designed to promote research and training in Model Theory and its applications to other branches of Mathematics.

These newsletters will be produced every three months and distributed electronically to MODNET members. This first newsletter is somewhat bureaucratic, being mostly concerned with explaining the structure of the Network and what it hopes to do. Future issues should contain reports of activities of the Network: visits funded by MODNET, new appointments made, announcements of new results, preprints and publications, forthcoming conferences .... . Items for inclusion in the Newsletter should be sent to the Network Coordinator, David Evans (d.evans_at_uea.ac.uk).

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1. Overview

MODNET is intended to stimulate research on a broad range of problems central to model theory and provide a wealth of opportunities for interactions between model theorists and those working in other areas of mathematics and theoretical computer science. The research topics which it covers can be found at:

http://www.logique.jussieu.fr/modnet/research/index.html

These topics are extensive but detailed, and any use of MODNET funds should be related to them.

The funding will mostly be used for the following activities:
- Appointment of six 3-year PhD studentships and 16 years of postdoctoral positions
- Organisation of training workshops and summer schools in model theory and related areas

- Two international conferences and three research workshops on model theory
- Networking money to enable members of the Network to attend events and arrange research visits relating to the Network's research topics.

More details about use of the Networking money can be found later in this Newsletter.

Progress on the research topics of the Network (as well as appointments made etc.) has to be reported annually to the European Commission. The writing of these reports is mainly the task of the Coordinator. It is likely to be a fairly onerous task, but it will be made easier if members of the Network will regularly post on the website announcements of publications, preprints, progress, visits made, or send them for inclusion in the Newsletter.

2. Website

The MODNET website is currently being organised by Zoé Chatzidakis (Paris), and can be found at:

http://www.logique.jussieu.fr/modnet/

Some of the pages are still under construction, but a great deal of information is already there. In particular, you can find:

- lists of members of the Network
- details of the research project of the Network
- more information about the appointments the Network hopes to make.

Over time, the website will also include

- links to preprints
- progress reports about the project
- announcements of new results
- reports of meetings.

Suggestions for other things to include are welcome.

3. Positions available

We are currently advertising six 3-year PhD positions, to start in October 2005. As MODNET is a research training network it is absolutely vital that we fill these positions with high quality students: many of the activities of the Network are intended to train these students in model theory and associated areas of mathematics. Please actively advertise these positions in your Department and amongst colleagues. Details can be found on the website at

http://www.logique.jussieu.fr/modnet/positions/PhD.html

Three 1-year postdoc positions are available to start in July 2005 and the closing date for applications for these is 11 February. There will be seven 1-year postdoc positions available for starting in 2006. Details of the postdoc positions can be found at

http://www.logique.jussieu.fr/modnet/positions/Postdoc.html

4. Structure of the Network

The members of the Network are divided into 14 teams based at universities which have signed the contract with the European Commission, and which will receive funds from the Commission via the coordinating organisation, the University of East Anglia (UK). Several teams also include external members: people whom we regard as being part of the Network, but who are not actually at the universities which signed the contract. Each team is headed by a 'Scientist in Charge' who will be more heavily involved in the bureaucracy of running the Network.

All contact with the European Commission should be channelled through the Network Coordinator, David Evans. The administration of the Network will be a joint task, mainly for the Coordinator and the Scientists in Charge. Some of the administration will formally be handled by committees (communicating mainly by e-mail), though in practice the operation is likely to be more informal than this system of committees suggests.

- The **steering committee** (Chair: David Evans (UEA)) is in overall control of the network and has responsibility for budgetary and financial matters .
- The **appointments committee** (Chair: Elisabeth Bouscaren (Paris)) is in charge of administering the appointment of researchers to the Network.
- The **training committee** (Chair: Frank Wagner (Lyon)) is in charge of meetings, workshops and conferences and overseeing the progress of appointed researchers. It will also coordinate secondments.
- The **scientific committee** (Chair: Boris Zilber (Oxford)) will oversee the scientific quality of the work being undertaken by the Network and advise on themes for workshops and conferences, and contacts with the wider mathematical community.

The current members of the Appointments Committee are Elisabeth Bouscaren, David Evans, Angus Macintyre and Kobi Peterzil. We will be looking to fill up the other committees in the near future.

5. Use of Networking funds

Requests for use of the Networking funds (for travel and short visits) should be made in advance to the Scientist in Charge of a team, who will consult with the Coordinator in case of doubt. It should be noted that the European Commission has very strict rules about the use of these (and other) funds and can ask for repayment of any money which it thinks is improperly spent. It can even suspend the budget of the entire Network if money

is not properly accounted for. Some forms of expenditure require prior approval by the Commission, and this should be sought well in advance of the proposed expenditure, via the Coordinator.

If you use the Networking funds you may be asked to write a short report on what they were used for, and how their use contributed to the research effort of the project.

According to the Commission, expenses of PhD students other than those employed by the Network are **not** eligible for payment from MODNET funds as they cannot be considered as senior staff. Expenses of postdocs **may** be eligible, but this will require prior approval from the Commission.

Reproduced below are some 'frequently asked questions' about use of the Networking funds, together with (slightly edited) replies from the Commission. Scientists in Charge will receive more detailed guidelines in due course.

Question: To what extent can the money be used to fund visits by people from outside the Network? In particular, can it be used to pay for invited speakers from outside the Network, at Network workshops and conferences? Can it be used to fund (short) visits to one of the partners by someone from outside the Network, in order to collaborate on one of the research tasks of the Network?

Reply: The Networking budget can be used to invite external experts to Networking events: prior approval by the Commission is required for invitations from outside EC, the Associated States and the countries of the participants. Short visits of external experts for collaboration are also eligible after discussion with the Commission.

Question: Suppose someone from the Network wishes to use the Networking money to attend a conference relevant to one of the Network research tasks. Is this acceptable, or must there be a certain number of partners represented at the conference? (This is particularly relevant to conferences on other parts of mathematics where there may be some connection with model theory.)

Reply: The Networking budget can be also used to attend conferences related to the Network research tasks: prior approval by the Commission is required for conferences outside EC, the Associated States and the countries of the participants.

Question: Can the money be used for someone in the Network to make a (short) visit to someone outside the Network, in order to collaborate on one of the research tasks?

Reply: The Networking budget can be used for short collaboration visits outside the Network after discussion with the Commission: prior approval by the Commission is required for invitations from outside EC, the Associated States and the countries of the participants.

6. Network meetings

Because of the large number of activities surrounding the Newton Institute programme on Model Theory and Applications in Algebra and Analysis (January - July 2005), there will be no events organised by MODNET until December 2005. The Networking funds can be used for participation in the Newton Institute's activities, subject to the guideline given above.

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