



Academic Board

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2022 (using Zoom).

Membership:

Present: Prof M Boddy (Chair), Prof R Bolden, E Botwood, M Bruce-Roberts, A Conway, Prof O Doran, Dr L Duong, Prof D Evans, A Geary, Dr L Goodwin, Prof D Greenham, Prof C Hobbs, T John, Dr M Kirjavainen-Morgan, Dr S Klein, Prof V Kumar, H Moyes, P Shelton, Prof M Smith, Dr E Stone, Prof A Varadi, Prof N Willey, A Vaughton (Officer).

Apologies: L Brown, Dr G Christopher, Prof A Coffey, Prof J Hancock, Prof M Rose

In attendance: Prof P Legg, Prof F Ritchie, Prof N Ryder, A Skinner, Prof J Smith, A Weeks

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RKEC22.01.1	WELCOMES AND APOLOGIES
RKEC22.01.1.1	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including SU President Evan Botwood, and Dr Stone representing the Animal Welfare and Ethics Sub-Committee. He reported that Professor Conway had left the University and that Professor Hancock had agreed to act as Chair of the Human Tissue Sub-Committee until a new chair is appointed. Professor Boddy further reported that one of the Committee's student representatives, Natalie Rothwell-Warn, had stood down and efforts would be made to find a replacement.
RKEC22.01.1.2	Apologies were received from L Brown, Dr G Christopher, Prof A Coffey, Prof J Hancock and Prof M Rose.
RKEC22.01.2	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING
RKEC22.01.2.1	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 as a full and accurate record.

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	Matters arising
RKEC22.01.2.2	RKEC21.10.6.3.7 - Chair to share the presentation on the proposed Research Strategy roadmap with members – see agenda item 3.2, RKEC22.01.4.2 below
RKEC22.01.2.3	RKEC21.10.7.1 - Research Integrity Report – the Chair confirmed that this had been submitted to Academic Board on 8 December 2021.
RKEC22.01.2.4	RKEC21.10.8.1 – Risk/Opportunities Register - the Chair confirmed that this had been submitted to Academic Board on 8 December 2021, and had incorporated the need for the additional resources required to be able to ensure that obligations can be met.
RKEC22.01.2.5	RKEC21.10.9.2.1 - Data protection guidance for students. The Chair explained that the issue of who was the data controller for student research had still not yet been fully resolved and may not be for some time. There were associated issues about supervision of students and guidance on data management.
RKEC22.01.2.6	The Chair of the RESC explained that the legal advice had indicated that 'UWE is likely to be a joint data controller with the student in respect of their student research if it has any influence over the purposes and means of personal data processing'. Given that supervisors teach our students how to research, including on data management, this must be the case in most, if not all, student research. The Data Protection team's suggestion that students might no longer be mandated to use OneDrive, as an example, might potentially have significant unintended consequences for students and supervisors. RESC members wanted this issue brought to the attention of RKEC. They were concerned that the legal definition about who is the data controller should not drive how we advise our students.
RKEC22.01.2.7	Professor Boddy noted that the final legal guidance was still awaited. This was a complex issue, very technical and important to get right. Members agreed that ethics committees should be giving the best possible advice, and – to ensure good ethical practice - data should be stored in the most secure place. The Committee confirmed the current practice that students be required to use OneDrive. The Chair thanked Professor Evans for raising this and stated that this matter would be brought back to the Committee when there was more to report, including on the final legal advice on the data controller issue.
RKEC22.01.3	ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION (1)
RKEC22.01.3.1	Health and Safety team annual update
RKEC22.01.3.1.1	Mrs Weeks presented her report (paper RKEC 22.01.02) which comprised her quarterly briefing paper (November 2021). The H&S roadmap was not a separate strategy, as in the past, but now aligned

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	with Strategy 2030 to ensure that H&S underpins the Strategy and that Faculties and Services have H&S action plans aligned to the Strategy. The objectives had been re-set because of Covid and it was encouraging that implementation of H&S had become embedded in the culture of the institution.
RKEC22.01.3.1.2	<p>A key area of work was an enhanced focus on staff health and wellbeing in seven priority areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Culture, values and belonging 2. Future fit ways of working 3. Staff empowered and enabled to thrive 4. Organisational design and workforce planning 5. Vibrant and engaging staff experience 6. Temperature checking 7. Enabling innovation <p>The current focus was ensuring accessible information for staff, and the creation of a health and wellbeing hub, to be promoted through Feel Good February.</p>
RKEC22.01.3.1.3	Mrs Weeks explained that the risk description was being held at level 12. She noted that the report had been prepared as the University was planning to enter Plan B safety measures and thought was now being given to the next steps following the lifting of those protections. The main recommendations in the report were the need to identify areas of stress and ill health.
RKEC22.01.3.1.4	Members flagged up the importance of including in the health and wellbeing plan such matters as supporting staff in the promotion round, research staff on fixed term contracts, balancing research and teaching workloads for ECRs, all areas which were causing anxiety. Further, people need to be clear where they should go for support. Mrs Weeks confirmed that any health and safety related issues in research should be reported to the relevant Faculty committees and representatives and RBI could support where necessary.
RKEC22.01.3.1.5	<p>Mrs Weeks explained that there continued to be a moratorium on international travel and fieldwork until (at least) the end of February. There is a process in place for a 'decision in principal' route for colleagues to get approval to travel, with some caveats. Up-to-date guidance was available on the intranet, and no online booking materials were currently available. There were no restrictions on domestic travel (although people should be aware of any local arrangements in the devolved nations). Mrs Weeks was due to meet William Liew to discuss UWE's position on payment for Covid testing in relation to overseas travel.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mrs Weeks for her very helpful presentation.</p>

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RKEC22.01.4	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS
RKEC22.01.4.1	Chair's report
RKEC22.01.4.1.1	The Chair reported that data on research bidding were now looking quite favourable, and a corner had been turned in comparison with the equivalent period the previous year.
RKEC22.01.4.1.2	<p>A meeting of the Research Challenge Group (RCG) had been held the previous week. The group comprised active researchers not in a formal role (and who were not professors at the time of joining the group). The discussion had generated a huge amount of feedback which the Chair undertook to pull together and circulate to the committee. The general feeling of the Group was that the direction of travel was good, although some processes seemed to act as barriers and frustrations, eg web profile. It was noted that while there was a significant focus on identifying areas with real strength and visibility the University should also look to support a broad base of research. The Chair confirmed that consultations along the lines of those held early last year were planned.</p> <p>Action: Chair</p>
RKEC22.01.4.1.3	Following the recent promotion round a significant number of promotions to Professor and Associate Professor had been made. The majority had been research appointments, but others had been made in KE and teaching. As a result of the extra WLB allocations to Associate Professors and the promotions, 15 new posts across the Faculties had been confirmed where specific pressure points had been identified as requiring backfill. The new appointees would join the starter programme for new staff.
RKEC22.01.4.1.4	The Chair advised members that the REF results would be published in early May. Each institution will receive its own results on 9 May, and all results will be published on 12 May. A small group had been set up internally to determine how the results will be disseminated. Ahead of the publication Research England would be providing dummy data to assist institutions in preparing the communications for their results. A burst of information, including league tables, would be published on 12 May.
RKEC22.01.4.2	Research Strategy 2030 – update on implementation
RKEC22.01.4.2.1	<p>The Chair gave a presentation on strategy implementation (copy on RKEC SharePoint site)</p> <p>The Strategy is underpinned by values, but are we being ambitious enough?</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from a good place, confident recruitment, finances strong R&E frequently mentioned in discussions, alongside student commitment Excellent set of impact case studies submitted to REF Doing well in TRAC benchmarking group Showcasing our excellent research through the web and social media.
RKEC22.01.4.2.2	<p>Living in a world of opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QR and HEIF have increased a little despite pressures elsewhere Ongoing commitment to expanding R&D Confident we will secure our place in Horizon Europe
RKEC22.01.4.2.3	<p>Clear targets going forwards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doubling number of staff submitted to REF – as a means not an end Bottom line – performing in the real world Research beacons and themes, used as a lens to focus our research activity and has led to focused investment Whole range of initiatives in place But – this remains a work in progress, is not set in stone but hopefully recognizes areas where we have real strength. Intention is to invest not only in currently identified priority areas but ensure we continue to monitor and support in other areas where funding is available.
RKEC22.01.4.2.4	<p>Growing capacity and capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> internally, including the initiatives externally, recruiting at different levels Looking to a step change in investment. There is willingness to invest, but not quite at that point yet. The Chair, together with Faculty research leads would be meeting with the DVC on 25 January to talk about ambitious investment plans going forwards. <p>The Chair invited all members to go back to him with any comments.</p>
RKEC22.01.5	ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION (2)
RKEC22.01.5.1	Equalities data on internal funding programmes
RKEC22.01.5.1.1	<p>Paper RKEC 22.01.03 presented the equalities data on two of the University's internal funding programmes, the Accelerator Programme and VC Challenge Fund. This complements the data provided on the VC Early Career Researcher scheme at the last meeting (Paper RKEC 21.10.03). The general conclusions from the analysis were that there did not appear to be any concerns about the gender breakdown for</p>

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	either scheme, with female staff well supported for both the Accelerator Programme and Challenge Fund.
RKEC22.01.5.1.2	The data on ethnicity appeared more troubling, with relatively poor success rates. Similar concerns had been raised in the context of the equalities data for the REF submission. It was also noted that the numbers of disabled staff applying to and having success with these schemes were very small, and it would be encouraging to see more (successful) applications from disabled colleagues. Professor Boddy recognised that all of the data now collected should be considered in greater detail.
RKEC22.01.5.1.3	Professor Hobbs noted that the analysis did not include the FET Accelerator Programme which started in 2020. She said that the data for that cohort appeared to be different, with 6 of the 16 staff awarded from a BME background. Overall, from an ethnicity point of view the data were much stronger, but were less so for gender, possibly unsurprisingly given the gender breakdown in the Faculty. The Chair agreed that this was useful information, and would be factored in.
RKEC22.01.5.1.4	It was noted that the Research Challenge Group had highlighted EDI as an issue, and questioned whether the University was dealing with this effectively. Professor Boddy stated that this would be reflected on by RSIG, including with reference to equivalent REF data. It was useful now to have a comprehensive set of actions. Action: Chair
RKEC22.01.5.2	Future Space – annual report
RKEC22.01.5.2.1	A copy of the Future Space presentation can be found on the Committee's SharePoint site . Members are also invited to view: "Five Years of Impact" - Future Space: Five Years of Impact
RKEC22.01.5.2.2	Aimee Skinner, Innovation Manager, presented the annual report for Future Space for 2020-21. She explained its mission to power innovation throughout the region, and gave examples of the people and organisations UWE works with. Future Space was working with around 50 companies at any one time, and had achieved almost 230 engagements in its first 5 years, with 20 UWE internships completed and 6 UWE graduates employed.
RKEC22.01.5.2.3	The Chair thanked Ms Skinner and noted the fantastic record of success, demonstrating the maturity of the relationship between Future Space and the University, and the promise of so much more to come. Future Space offered excellent connections, and it was good to see the spread across the University with connections in all faculties. Members stated that there was huge interest in engaging with Future Space but it was not always clear what the best route for engagement was. Ms Skinner confirmed that all faculties were included in the internship

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	scheme, with the majority of work happening with FET and HAS. She would be happy to go out to the faculties, and is the appropriate point of contact for any enquiries.
RKEC22.01.5.2.4	Professor Boddy thanked Ms Skinner for a great presentation and great success story.
RKEC22.01.5.3	Expanding Research Excellence (ERE)
RKEC22.01.5.3.1	The Expanding Research Excellence (ERE) scheme was first launched in the course of 2021 with four clusters funded, supporting cross-disciplinary areas, and building for the future. Two of the clusters were presenting on their work to this meeting, and the remaining two would be invited to the RKEC meeting in March. Both of the projects discussed on this occasion were fantastic examples of what the University is trying to achieve and bringing colleagues together.
	(Note, Professor Boddy left the meeting after the first ERE presentation and Professor Hobbs took over the chair.)
RKEC22.01.5.3.1	<p>EREOSDC - Professor Felix Ritchie and Professor Jim Smith (Link to presentation)</p> <p>This work encompasses staff from FBL, FET, HAS and the SCU. It aims to advance its profile and make clear connections. The research leaders are aiming to reposition themselves as a research centre, and collaborate with the other clusters. Professor Ritchie noted that the ESRC was keeping a watching brief on their work.</p>
RKEC22.01.5.3.2	<p>CSC3 - Professor Nic Ryder and Professor Phil Legg (Link to presentation)</p> <p>Cyber security and cyber crime (CSC3) aims to address the multi-disciplinary area of computer sciences and law. It officially started activity on 18 January and will provide opportunities to bring the clusters together.</p>
RKEC22.01.6	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
RKEC22.01.6.1	Sub-Committee Updates
RKEC22.01.6.1.1	<p>Graduate School Sub-Committee: Professor Willey requested that members note, in particular, the proposals in his report and the intention to take discussions on this elsewhere.</p> <p>Action: All</p>
RKEC22.01.6.2	Faculty Research Updates

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RKEC22.01.6.2.1	The reports were starred and not discussed.
RKEC22.01.6.3	Library Services Report
RKEC22.01.6.3.1	The report was starred and not discussed.
RKEC22.01.6.4	External Bidding Details
RKEC22.01.6.4.1	The report was starred and not discussed.
RKEC22.01.7	HEALTH AND SAFETY
RKEC22.01.7.1	No health and safety concerns were raised.
RKEC22.01.8	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
RKEC22.01.8.1	Professor Hobbs thanked the Officer, Alison Vaughton, for her service to this Committee over the years and wished her well in her retirement.
	DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS 2021-22 Wednesday 30 March 2022, 14:00-16:30 Wednesday 15 June 2022, 14:00-16:30

Actions

RKEC22.01.4.1.2	The Chair to summarise and circulate the feedback from the meeting with the Research Challenge Group.	Chair
RKEC22.01.5.1.4	The Chair to discuss with RSIG the comments of the Research Challenge Group about EDI, and whether the University was dealing with this effectively.	Chair
RKEC22.01.6.1.1	Graduate School Sub-Committee: Members to note the proposals in Professor Willey's report and feed back any comments to him.	All