



Academic Board

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021.

Membership:

Present: Prof M Boddy (Chair), Prof R Bolden, A Conway, Prof M Conway, Dr L Duong, Prof D Evans, Dr L Goodwin, Dr D Greenham, Prof J Hancock, Prof C Hobbs, T John, Dr M Kirjavainen-Morgan, Dr S Klein, Prof V Kumar, P Shelton, Prof A Varadi, Prof N Willey, A Vaughton (Officer).

Apologies: E Botwood, L Brown, M Bruce-Roberts, Dr G Christopher, Prof A Coffey, Prof O Doran, A Geary, H Moyes, Prof M Rose, N Rothwell-Warn, Prof M Smith

In attendance: S Carrie, F Bathurst, EDI (for agenda item 7.1)

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RKEC21.10.1	WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES
RKEC21.10.1.1	Mrs John welcomed members to the meeting and chaired the beginning of the meeting while Professor Boddy was otherwise engaged. All members introduced themselves. Apologies were received from SU President E Botwood, L Brown, M Bruce-Roberts, Dr G Christopher, Professor A Coffey, Professor O Doran, A Geary, H Moyes, Professor M Rose, N Rothwell-Warn and Professor M Smith.
RKEC21.10.2	COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION TOOL
RKEC21.10.2.1	Miss Carrie gave a presentation on the Committee Diversity Toolkit (paper RKEC 21.10.05). Members formed small groups to discuss the current data on the diversity of RKEC membership, whether the RKE Committee considered a range of voices when taking decisions, and what more the Committee might do to ensure diverse voices feed into decision making. A note of the discussions is here .

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RKEC21.10.3	MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE
RKEC21.10.3.1	Professor Boddy chaired the meeting from this point forwards. The Committee noted the Terms of Reference (paper RKEC 21.10.01). One member commented that the relationship between the Faculty Board and RKE Committees (both University and Faculty) was not joined up, and that the structure was therefore not effective for raising issues. The Chair acknowledged this, but explained that this had come about as result of the recent revisions to the Academic Board structure so it was probably too soon to re-visit. The issue was however noted.
RKEC21.10.4	RKEC BUSINESS PLAN, 2021-22
RKEC21.10.4.1	The RKEC Business Plan (paper RKEC 21.10.02) was presented as an outline of proposed activity over the coming year and would be added to in due course.
RKEC21.10.5	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING
RKEC21.10.5.1	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2021 as a full and accurate record.
	Matters arising
RKEC21.10.5.2	RKEC21.06.2.4 – see RKEC21.10.6.2.2 below
RKEC21.10.5.3	RKEC21.06.4.2.3 The Chair reported that the proposal on not accepting funding from tobacco companies had been approved by Academic Board on 7 July.
RKEC21.10.5.4	He further noted that the RKEC Assurance Report had been endorsed by Academic Board, and that Graduate School amendments had been approved.
RKEC21.10.5.5	RKEC21.06.2.3 The RESC Annual Assurance Report had been amended and approved by the Chair.
RKEC21.10.6	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS
RKEC21.10.6.1	Chair's report
RKEC21.10.6.1.1	The Chair reminded members that while the easing of Covid restrictions now permitted travel for research purposes within the UK, overseas travel remained embargoed by the University until January at the earliest, and cannot be booked ahead on the assumption that things will have changed by that time. The Directorate was aiming to make a decision on travel ahead of that date. Staff should contact Philippa Shelton in RBI about any issues or concerns.

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RKEC21.10.6.1.2	The University had received notification from the University Alliance that access to Horizon Europe was problematic at present, linked to ongoing issues around the Northern Ireland Protocol, but that BEIS were addressing the matter.
RKEC21.10.6.1.3	The Chair announced that an exciting umbrella project had been launched, working with South Gloucestershire Council, Toshiba and UWE, to create a fast fibre link between the University and the Science Park.
RKEC21.10.6.2	Research Strategy 2030 – update on implementation
	Mrs John updated on the individual schemes:
RKEC21.10.6.2.1	VC ECR: 35 projects. A face to face introductory meeting was held in early September and attended by 24 award holders. All have now been allocated RBI mentors in addition to their academic mentors. Their training programme was being put together, starting in November.
RKEC21.10.6.2.2	VC ECR equalities data (paper RKEC 21.10.03). The gender analysis showed a slightly more successful rate for females. On ethnicity, 36% of applications were received from staff from minority groups, with 32% of the awards made to these staff (following 2 years where numbers of applications were much lower and the success rate particularly poor). The assessors had been prepared to consider positive action to ensure a more diverse pool of award holders but had not identified any specific issues. The age profile of applicants and award holders demonstrated that the term 'Early Career Researcher' does not necessarily equate to young researcher, with seven (14%) of the applicants over the age of 45, six of whom were successful. The final chart in the paper showed the REF status of past award holders. The Chair noted that we must acknowledge that people move on, and in some ways the scheme is about being a good employer, bringing researchers on.
RKEC21.10.6.2.3	Accelerator Programme (aimed at mid-career researchers): 72 staff, including around 50 new applicants to the scheme and 20 from the established FET scheme. The intention of the scheme is to accelerate research bidding. This would require strong support from faculties, and there would be a gateway between years one and two.
RKEC21.10.6.2.4	PGR bursaries: Round 1 was complete, Round 2 almost complete. Bursaries would be available for successful large bids.
RKEC21.10.6.2.5	Expanding Research Excellence (ERE): Four clusters of research had been confirmed: micro-plastics, data safety, water, and cyber security and cyber-crime. Up to £100k of internal support was being provided, and each project was expected to deliver a big bid.

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RKEC21.10.6.2.6	Associate Professors: an additional workload allowance would be provided from January. The invitation for this was due to go out by the end of the week, and a get-together of Associate Professors was planned for mid-November, as an opportunity to discuss their roles and determine support required and how they might otherwise be helped.
RKEC21.10.6.2.7	Communications and consultations: Following the three popular sessions earlier in the year, similar events would be arranged in the spring. RBI staff were working with Marketing to improve the RKE presence on UWE's webpages.
RKEC21.10.6.2.8	The Chair acknowledged that there were a great many initiatives, all starting at the same time, but the intention was to take this opportunity to give research a kick start. Scheduling would be improved for the next round of initiatives.
RKEC21.10.6.3	Research Strategy 2030 - roadmap
RKEC21.10.6.3.1	The Chair reported that a longer-term roadmap was being developed, alongside the subject readiness review. Initial thinking was around determining milestones and planning the implementation of the strategy for the first 3-5 years.
RKEC21.10.6.3.2	The focus from the strategy was prioritising and growing research with impact. This covered various strands, and a Research Advisory Group (RAG) was being established, comprising Research Centre Directors plus others who can advise and critique plans. There would be a strong focus on delivering external income and high-quality outputs ahead of REF2028. The RAG would provide expert opinion and diverse thinking. A review of Research Centres and Groups would be conducted by the end of the academic year, involving extensive consultation, and possibly some external review. The Chair stressed that this exercise was not intended to 'set hares running', but to ensure that current strengths are recognised and capitalised on. There was no intention to abolish Research Centres and Groups but to take the opportunity to have a proper review. Research Centres are healthy and important vehicles for our research ambitions.
RKEC21.10.6.3.3	It had been confirmed that the REF results would be published in May, and lessons learned would be addressed at that stage. This would be an opportunity to review whether the strategy adopted had been successful in terms of quality and quantity, and how our UOAs are mapping to subject areas. High quality research has a clear impact on teaching and league tables, and further thought needed to be given to how comprehensive we might want to remain.
RKEC21.10.6.3.4	A key focus of the strategy was growing research capacity. To achieve this the spread of internal schemes would be maintained, thereby seed-funding internal research and promoting talent that might

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	otherwise not come to light. The intention was to recruit a high proportion of staff who are already research-active or have research potential (following the lead of FET).
RKEC21.10.6.3.5	The Chair hoped that appointments to lead the colleges in the new structure would be made by Christmas. There remained uncertainty, at this stage, about the names and specific responsibilities of individual roles. Each college will have a research leader, focusing on quality and impact, with individuals identified at school level who will have responsibility for REF. The new arrangements will ensure that Research Centres are tied into the school structure, and with research being increasingly mainstreamed, schools will be accountable for their research.
RKEC21.10.6.3.6	The University currently invests 12.4% of its resource in research, well below the level of other HEIs in our TRAC benchmark group. The target for 2024-5 will be 17% (ie average for benchmark group), then for 2029-30, 22% (equivalent to the bottom edge of the lower quartile). Ultimately UWE should aim to be in the top 25% of universities like us, and in order to achieve this a shift in resources in the University will be required as an ongoing matter.
RKEC21.10.6.3.7	The following targets have been set for research: Number of academic staff whose work is eligible for submission to REF to rise from 350 in 2021, to 550 in 2024/25 and to 800 in 2029/30; PGR completions – 70 in 2021, to 140 in 24/25 and target 150plus in 2029/30. Action: The Chair to share the presentation with members.
RKEC21.10.6.3.8	One member asked whether, given the increased workload allowance for Associate Professors, any consideration had been given to allocating research workload bundles to Senior Lecturers. The Chair noted that the allocation of scholarship time, together with the current new starter allowance, and the opportunity to apply for internal schemes meant that a significant amount of resource was already available. However, the Committee noted that with the teaching year extending, particularly in the context of the NSS bounce-back, putting greater pressure on Senior Lecturers, there was anecdotal evidence that SLs did not have sufficient time to undertake their research and were at the pinch point with what they can deliver. There was recognition that there needed to be closer working with LTSEC on this, and that more resource needed to be invested in faculties. It would be helpful to have more discussion of workloads around PhD supervision and governance. The Graduate School Director proposed to bring forward proposals from the Graduate School Sub-committee on potential Graduate School developments, taking this opportunity to do some things differently.
RKEC21.10.7	ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

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	Research Integrity Annual Report to Governors, 2020-21
RKEC21.10.7.1	Members received the Research Integrity Annual Report to Governors for 2020-21 (paper RKEC 21.10.04). Following approval at this Committee the report would be submitted to Academic Board and to the Board of Governors. No comments were raised by members. The Chair noted that the Governors would be interested in the report and thanked the Governance team for putting this together. Action: Officer
RKEC21.10.8	ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
RKEC21.10.8.1	Risk/Opportunities Register
	This item was due to be discussed at this meeting however Mark Webster was unwell and unable to attend in person. It was proposed that this item be brought back to the next meeting. Action: Officer
RKEC21.10.8.2	Update on external funding opportunities
RKEC21.10.8.2.1	Ms Shelton provided an update on external funding opportunities (paper RKEC 21.10.08). She noted that Research Council delivery plans had been delayed until after the budget and that ARIA may have a big impact. A number of significant calls were expected, but had been stalled by the upcoming budget. A definite focus on sustainability was anticipated, and quite possibly more funding around Covid while the pandemic continues. Academics were being encouraged to apply for standard UKRI awards. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships remained popular and high profile. Ms Shelton noted the current hiatus with Horizon Europe. There were six grants in the system at present, and at least five academics aiming to submit to the February deadline. Further calls were anticipated in 2022.
RKEC21.10.8.2.2	The Chair recommended that members review the UKRI website periodically for opportunities. The Research Councils appeared to be trying to be more open. For example, EPSRC had agreed to come to UWE for a meeting and it was hoped that a session might be arranged with the Early Career Researchers.
RKEC21.10.9	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
RKEC21.10.9.1	Library Services
RKEC21.10.9.1.1	<i>Elsevier negotiations</i> Mrs Conway updated members on the ongoing negotiations with Elsevier to secure a new deal. The hope was of a move from a subscription only model, with no open access element, to a more sustainable read and publish model. There remained the possibility that

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	no deal might be negotiated, which would have a significant impact for publishers and for students. The Research Team in the library was investigating possible scenarios if no deal were agreed. It was crucial that the sector remain united. A further meeting was due to take place in the next two weeks, and it was expected that more information would be available by December.
RKEC21.10.9.1.2	<i>New UKRI Open Access Policy</i> There was a push towards removing the option to embargo publications, with more content being made available immediately open access. This was particularly likely in the context of Covid. UKRI would continue to provide institutions with open access grants. From 1 January 2024 UKRI-funded monographs would also be required to be open access, which would be challenging and require further consideration.
RKEC21.10.9.2	Sub-Committee Updates
RKEC21.10.9.2.1	The Chair of RESC alerted members to an issue concerning student research, GDPR and privacy notices. The Data Protection team had concluded that students should not use the UWE Privacy Notice as this should only apply where the University is the data controller. It had been determined that students should take responsibility for their research data. This matter had been discussed with the University's Data Protection team and was close to being resolved. Legal advice was being taken to confirm who should be the data controller for student data and an interim position had been reached, with guidance prepared by the Data Protection team, and revised participant information sheets and consent forms for students. Members were asked to disseminate this information. Action: All
RKEC21.10.9.2.2	The RESC Chair advised the Committee that this position would be kept under review. A lot of concern had been raised at the most recent RESC meeting about this, and there was unease in departmental groups as well, particularly with regard to the responsibilities of supervisors. It was noted that some other HEIs had accepted that they will be the data controllers for student research.
RKEC21.10.9.2.3	The Committee received update reports from each of the Sub-committees (papers RKEC 21.10.11-14). The Chair commended these to the membership.
RKEC21.10.9.3	Faculty Research Updates
RKEC21.10.9.3.1	The Committee received reports from each of the Faculty Associate Deans (Research)/Research Directors (papers RKEC 21.10.15-18)
RKEC21.10.9.4	Annual Report on Health and Safety 2020-21

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RKEC21.10.9.4.1	The committee noted the annual report from the Head of Health and Safety, Alison Weeks (paper RKEC 21.10.19).
RKEC21.10.9.5	External Bidding Details
RKEC21.10.9.5.1	Committee members were provided with information on external bidding. The Chair noted that these were still not in final proposed format.
RKEC21.10.10	HEALTH AND SAFETY
RKEC21.10.10.1	No health and safety concerns were raised.
RKEC21.10.11	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
RKEC21.10.11.1	The Chair recommended that members review the research metrics (available on the Committee's SharePoint site). These show that research income (ie money spent) has flat-lined which was to be expected and the value of bids won has declined somewhat, which will likely be reflected in research income. However, bidding activity continues to be healthy (including Horizon EU).
	DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS 2021-22 Wednesday 19 January 2022, 14:00-16:30 Wednesday 30 March 2022, 14:00-16:30 Wednesday 15 June 2022, 14:00-16:30

Actions

RKEC21.10.6.3.7	The Chair to share the presentation on the proposed Research Strategy roadmap with members.	Chair
RKEC21.10.7.1	Research Integrity Report – the Officer to submit the report to Academic Board	Officer
RKEC21.10.8.1	Risk/Opportunities Register: to be brought back to the next meeting.	Officer/Mark Webster
RKEC21.10.9.2.1	Data protection guidance for students – all to disseminate changes to ethical requirements	All