



Academic Board

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021.

Membership:

Present: Prof M Boddy (Chair), Prof R Bolden, R Bond, Dr G Christopher Prof A Coffey, A Conway, Prof M Conway, Prof O Doran, Dr S Dragojlovic-Oliveira, Prof G Edwards, Prof D Evans, Dr D Greenham, Prof J Hancock, Prof D Harcourt, Prof C Hobbs, T John, V Jones, Dr M Kirjavainen-Morgan, Dr Susanne Klein, Prof V Kumar, L Medel, H Moyes, Prof M Rose, N Rothwell-Warn, P Shelton, Prof M Smith, Prof N Willey, A Vaughton (Officer).

Apologies: Prof R Bolden, A Chidinma Nnajifor, A Geary, V Jones

In attendance: M Webster (Agenda item 5.2 Risk Register), A Weeks (Agenda item 5.1 Health and Safety),

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RKEC21.01.1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
RKEC21.01.1.1	<p>The Chair welcomed new members to the Committee: Professor David Evans, appointed Chair of RESC from November 2020; and Natalie Rothwell-Warn (as a student representative). The Chair sought the Committee's approval to co-opt a second student representative. The Committee agreed and it was hoped that this appointment would be confirmed very shortly. The Chair noted that Hazel Edwards had left UWE, and welcomed Dr David Greenham from ACE, who was taking on some of her role.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Professor Bolden (Professor Edwards attended as alternate), Vicky Jones (Laura Medel attended for Strategic Communications and Marketing), Andy Geary (Technicians representative) and the SU President.</p>
RKEC21.01.2	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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RKEC21.01.2.1	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020.
	Matters arising
RKEC21.01.2.2	<p>RKEC 20.10.2.2 – Diversity in UWE Research</p> <p>The Chair reported that discussion of this item had been postponed until the following meeting (March), when Lizzie Johnson would present the representation tool and EDI data would be available. Members requested that the significant stress caused to staff by the pandemic should be acknowledged and considered, noting that there was evidence, some anecdotal, of the impact on women in particular. The Chair confirmed that the discussion would be broadened to include this issue.</p>
RKEC21.01.2.3	<p>RKEC 20.10.3.2 - *Updated business plan</p> <p>The business plan had been updated (RKEC21.01.01) to include specific dates for the updates from a number of sub-groups (eg Athena Swan, WRMS) and research-related areas of working (eg H&S, risk register) as requested at the previous meeting.</p>
RKEC21.01.2.4	<p>RKEC 20.10.6.1.3 - Provision of professional research development for technical staff</p> <p>The Chair reported that this would be brought to the March meeting with the annual update on the Technician Commitment.</p>
RKEC21.01.2.5	<p>RKEC 20.10.9.1 – Role of representatives on the Committee</p> <p>The Chair and Officer had discussed the role of representatives on the Committee and sought advice from colleagues in Academic Governance. They had confirmed that, in revising the terms of reference and membership of various committees, the purpose of adding more elected representatives was to increase the staff voice in academic governance; as otherwise committees tend to comprise only people who hold management positions of some form or other. The role of these representatives is to bring their own perspective to discussions in their capacity as a member of a particular category of staff.</p>
RKEC21.01.3	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS
RKEC21.01.3.1	Chair's report
RKEC21.01.3.1.1	<p>The Chair reported that the REF submission was now in its last stages, with drafts of environment statements and impact case studies very close to finalised. They were now being edited to ensure that the University's research is portrayed in the best possible light. Thoughts were already turning to the following REF, possibly in 2028. At this stage there was no guarantee about a further exercise, or what form any assessment exercise might take. The University would nevertheless</p>

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	need to begin preparations, for example continuing to capture impact from research.
RKEC21.01.3.1.2	The Chair reported that during this third lockdown period laboratories continued to be open for researchers and PGRs (with confirmation from their Associate Dean and the Health and Safety officer in their faculty). PGR students must liaise with their Directors of Study on lab capacity. Projects would again be stalled by the restrictions, and would need to be looked at on a case by case basis, and risk assessed. Decisions on starting and re-starting work would ultimately be taken by the Associate Dean for Research in each faculty, and any particularly problematical cases referred to the Chair. Researchers should email the Research Admin team (res.admin@uwe.ac.uk) for advice and the requests would be channelled from there to the Associate Dean. For PGR, the Graduate School was tracking research activity and hoping there may be some return to normality by April.
RKEC21.01.3.1.3	The Chair reported that a round for promotions to Professor and Associate Professor was due to be announced within the coming month. Discussions were currently ongoing between Human Resources and Executive Deans. The DVC confirmed that the criteria had been determined, and that colleagues would be able to apply to a number of strands: teaching, research and knowledge exchange excellence. This would be a developmental process, with opportunities for constructive feedback. It was anticipated that a lot of people would put themselves forward, and faculties would initially identify the strongest cases, and those on the developmental path, however the Chair stressed that there was not a quota or fixed sum of money for these advancements, but that decisions would be based on demand, bearing in mind the need to be sensible and realistic.
RKEC21.01.3.1.4	Thanks to colleagues in Strategic Communications and Marketing research would shortly be seeing a greater web presence. This would be organised along beacon lines, and put up alongside the current web content. It was intended to be targeted at both external and internal audiences and expected to be live by 5 February.
RKEC21.01.3.2	REF2021 Update
RKEC21.01.3.2.1	Mr Bond provided a short update (RKEC21.01.02) on progress with the REF2021 submission which was now in its final phases. There remained the possibility of further delay, with concerns raised specifically by medical/clinical colleagues and administrators at other HEIs, but the submission date was not expected to change.
RKEC21.01.3.2.2	The size and shape of the University's submission was now known with 934 outputs attributed to 400 members of staff, 41 impact cases studies and 14 environment statements. The PIMS system was working satisfactorily, but the REF submission system continued to throw up some issues for some institutions. There was still much to do, but Mr

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	Bond was confident that the UWE submission would be ready. Additionally, there were many tasks to be undertaken following submission, including the report on individual circumstances and the updated equality assessment. A list of submitted outputs would be published, probably in April.
RKEC21.01.3.2.3	Mr Bond confirmed that the submissions would be available for senior managers to review, but not for wider sharing, and since Christmas ownership of the narratives had rested with the REF SIG. No further edits or changes were anticipated from beyond this group.
RKEC21.01.3.2.4	The Chair noted that the range of impact demonstrated in the impact case studies was really fantastic, and that they would be used to celebrate UWE research on the webpages after the exercise, and demonstrated the breadth and depth of the University's research with impact.
RKEC21.01.3.3	Business Engagement and Enterprise Update
RKEC21.01.3.3.1	Mrs John provided an update on recent business engagement and enterprise activity. This included work on regional development programmes in which the University has been particularly successful in securing funds to support local business: including the Digital Challenge Fund. Activity was now extending to Swindon and Wiltshire (Innovation and R&D) and Gloucester (scale up work), and there was considerable demand for innovation for skills (WECA funded). Internally, consideration was being given to how best to use the facilities of the UEZ/Future Space to support the Research Strategy 2030. There was increasing activity in CPD, especially around health, including training people on carrying out Covid vaccinations.
RKEC21.01.3.3.2	The first dataset for the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) was now due in Winter 2021. Mrs John was hopeful that UWE's data would be favourable. Alongside the KEF, a self-assessment would be conducted over the coming 6 months, as required by the Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC) to which UWE has signed up.
RKEC21.01.3.3.3	The BEIS R&D roadmap continued to be significant, and work was ongoing to determine how this was to be implemented. This included deep dive work on bureaucracy, and how HEIs work with business. The levelling up agenda remained a key issue.
RKEC21.01.4	ITEMS FOR APPROVAL
RKEC21.01.4.1	RESC Guidance for Security Sensitive Research
RKEC21.01.4.1.1	The Chair of RESC provided the background to this item, noting that much of the policy and guidance relating to research ethics needed updating. The guidance on Security Sensitive Research (RKEC21.01.03)

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	had been addressed at this stage as two applications for ethical approval had highlighted that the guidance did not cover the submitted proposals. Further applications relating to cybersecurity programmes were likely to be made and the revised guidance now addressed this issue and took on board other changes required. The key change related to distinguishing between low risk undergraduate research and potentially high risk research. Professor Evans had liaised with Jess Winkler (UWE Prevent Lead) and processes were now being put in place to register cases for Prevent purposes. The current revised guidance had been discussed and approved by RESC, and the RESC Chair now sought RKEC approval.
RKEC21.01.4.1.2	The Committee approved the revised guidance and proposed that it be made clear that this applies to everyone undertaking research at UWE, ie including visiting fellows, etc.
RKEC21.01.4.1.3	The Chair queried whether researchers conducting work in collaboration with those from other HEIs or bodies are bound by the University's governance procedures, and vice versa. It was agreed that this issue should be looked into separately and referred to the Academic Governance team. Action: Academic Governance team
RKEC21.01.5	ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
	Alison Weeks and Mark Webster joined the meeting for items 5.1 and 5.2.
RKEC21.01.5.1	Health and Safety annual update
RKEC21.01.5.1.1	Mrs Weeks, UWE H&S Manager, presented the most recent quarterly reports to Directorate (November 2020) (RKEC21.01.04). She noted that last year had clearly been very much impacted by Covid, but wanted to reassure the research community that health and safety remained very much part of the University's strategy. Action plans, impacted by Covid, had been re-aligned. Specifically in relation to health and wellbeing, action plans had been produced for both students and staff. The H&S team was helping to support faculties and services, and ensure they are aware of what is available.
RKEC21.01.5.1.2	On fire safety, accident statistics had been lower over the previous year, which was to have been expected with fewer people on campus. For research in general, the importance of continuing to review H&S risk assessments was stressed, and of being aware of a rapidly changing environment. The Chair stressed that these were critically important issues, both on campus or when conducting off-site working and going forward more thought would need to be given to research-specific health and safety.
RKEC21.01.5.2	UWE Risk Register

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RKEC21.01.5.2.1	Mark Webster, Head of Business Resilience, explained that attempts were being made to improve the overall risk assessment process with registers going through the relevant committees to ensure appropriate scrutiny and consultation. Rather than identifying a list of risks, one strategic risk was identified, with associated 'threats' to be managed.
RKEC21.01.5.2.2	He presented the Research Strategic Risk register at 20 January 2021, and noted that the threat considered to be the most significant for research was Culture: failure to establish a strong culture of research across all academic staff. This needed to be focused on and thought given to external profile. Members noted that both PGR and diversity should be added to the list of control gaps in relation to Culture.
RKEC21.01.5.2.3	The Risk Register would be a standing agenda item ahead of the three audit committee meetings. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have a sense of the magnitude of other risks at the University, and Mr Webster undertook to include a summary of all other risks for future meetings. He further reported that he and Jodie Anstee would be reviewing the register in the context of Strategy 2030. A similar register was being compiled for innovation and knowledge exchange and would be brought to this Committee in due course. The Chair asked members to review the document, to flag to him any concerns or missing threats, and to bear in mind those aspects which members would want to hold themselves to account for. Action: All
RKEC21.01.5.3	UWE Open Access Policy
RKEC21.01.5.3.1	Mrs Conway presented paper RKEC21.01.06, UWE Open Access Policy, noting that this goes further than required for the REF, and aims to make clear the responsibilities of researchers and HEIs. This supports the University's open research statement, providing details of what needs to happen and what people need to do, and aligns with funders requirements on open access. The Policy encourages an open access mindset and supports the University's REF submission.
RKEC21.01.5.3.2	Mrs Conway reported that the policy had already been presented to Faculty RKE Committees and she was keen to hear the comments of members of this committee and move the policy to implementation. An equality analysis was in preparation.
RKEC21.01.5.3.3	The Committee discussed the arrangements for ensuring that outputs are deposited in the UWE Research Repository. There was already a rigorous process in place for PGR, but nothing specific for staff. It was suggested that it may be useful to have one to enact if necessary. Mrs Conway stated that the position on open access was challenging in many ways, but they were seeing an increasing number of journals becoming open access. A number of questions were raised and discussed around the researcher's responsibility in relation to publishing; the extent to which the University could dictate this; and

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	whether the policy should apply equally to both internally and externally funded research. Researchers remained concerned about where best to publish, a decision which needed to be beneficial both to the researcher and the University.
RKEC21.01.5.3.4	Mrs John requested that the policy be reviewed on to the IP Manager, and the Committee agreed that, subject to there being no issues raised by Mr Houlihan, the policy was approved. Action: RBI Director
RKEC21.01.6	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
RKEC21.01.6.1	Research Centre commentaries
RKEC21.01.6.1.1	Given the Covid situation and proximity to the REF submission, Centres of Excellence had been asked to provide short commentaries on a set of research metrics for the last three years, rather than full annual reports for 2019/20 (RKEC21.01.07a and b). Associate Deans or their equivalent were now being asked to review these and have conversations with Research Centre Directors to discuss Centres' activities and their fitness for purpose. Members were asked to pass any comments on to the relevant Associate Dean/alternate. Action: Associate Deans
RKEC21.01.6.2	Faculty Research Updates, Sub-Committee Updates, Library Services Report, External Bidding Details
RKEC21.01.6.2.1	The Chair noted that there was a lot of useful information in these starred reports, and encouraged members to read them. These reports would continue to be starred unless members requested that they be opened.
RKEC21.01.6.2.2	On external bidding the Chair reported that Rachael Fleetwood had been tasked with devising the most useful and succinct set of income data, including for this committee. The data would be presented in a more standardised format.
RKEC21.01.7	HEALTH AND SAFETY
RKEC21.01.7.1	No health and safety issues were raised.
RKEC21.01.8	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
RKEC21.01.8.1	Ms Rothwell-Warn (PGR representative) suggested that it would be helpful if there were a register of all PGR work across the University. Professor Willey advised that a search on the University's Research Repository of doctoral theses in recent years might be a helpful start.

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	DATES OF MEETINGS 2020-21
	Wednesday 21 October 2020, 14:00-16:30
	Wednesday 20 January 2021, 14:00-16:30
	Wednesday 24 March 2021, 14:00-16:30
	Wednesday 16 June 2021, 14:00-16:30

Actions

RKEC21.01.4.1.3	Determine governance requirements relating to (external) collaborating academics working at UWE, and UWE academics working at other HEIs	Academic Governance team
RKEC21.01.5.2.3	Risk Register – members to flag any concerns or issues to the Chair	All
RKEC21.01.5.3.4	Mrs John to refer the Open Access Policy to the IP Manager for comment prior to approval	RBI Director
RKEC21.01.6.1.1	Associate Deans or their equivalent to review Research Centre commentaries and discuss with Research Centre Directors	Associate Deans (RKE)/alternates