



Academic Board

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24 March 2026 in Room 7X111 on Frenchay Campus.

Present: Amanda Coffey (Chair), David Barrett, Amanda Conway, Mary Cramp, Olena Doran, Charlotte Edmunds, Pujan Ghosh, Marc Griffiths, Bernhard Gross, Enda Hayes, Khadiza Hossain, Tracey John (Secretary), Jessica Lamond, Marcus Olivand, Daniela Paddeu, Jenna Pandeli, Carinna Parraman, Wendy Phillips, Noelle Quenivet, Darren Reynolds, Philippa Shelton

Apologies: Beth Daniels, John Hancock, Gerhard Kemp

In attendance: David Young (Officer)

RKEC.26.03.1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
RKEC.26.03.1.1	Members were welcomed to the Committee, including Prof. Wendy Phillips, the new CBL Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange. Apologies were noted in the usual way.
RKEC.26.03.1.2	No declarations of interest were noted.
RKEC.26.03.2	DEEP DIVE
RKEC.26.03.2.1	Working Differently – The Challenges and Opportunities for UWE Research Presentation was received.
RKEC.26.03.2.1.1	The PVC Research and Knowledge Exchange gave a presentation on the rapidly changing research funding landscape, with challenges and opportunities identified by the Colleges.
RKEC.26.03.2.1.2	The “three-bucket” model of categorising UK public research funding has direct, structural implications for universities, reshaping how funding is framed, allocated, and judged. There is

RKEC.26.03.2.1.3	now increased scrutiny from government on how the sector is using QR funding, with a more stringent requirement for institutional reporting. It was noted that QR funding is mostly counted in curiosity-driven research (bucket 1), so it is important that UWE capitalises on our expertise in this area. But we now face greater pressure to demonstrate alignment with the other two buckets: national priorities and economic impact/innovation support.
RKEC.26.03.2.1.4	Even though the University's mission is transformational and more than just income, external funding is vital for supporting and cross-subsidising our researchers, thereby securing our research foundations. In the context of shifting research priorities, it is vital that we both expand and evidence our role as a proactive driver for economic growth, innovation and workforce development.
RKEC.26.03.2.1.5	The following comments were made in discussion: 1) What is the future of REF and QR and the possible future linkage between these systems? 2) Research activities need increasingly to be viewed through a commercial lens. 3) External pressure could lead to some of our research communities feeling marginalised, so how can we ensure all colleagues feel valued. 4) There are real opportunities for collaboration, partnership, interdisciplinary work, and student engagement.
RKEC.26.03.2.1.6	It was agreed by the Committee that we must work boldly, purposively, and not be afraid to think differently. We must adopt an "outside-in" approach, embedding a strategic view within our processes, leaning into efficiencies and organisational improvements, being keenly aware of the "time to value" metric, and applying an end-to end perspective to all our research activities.
RKEC.26.03.3	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
RKEC.26.03.3.1	Previous minutes Paper RKEC.26.03.01 was received.
RKEC.26.03.3.1.1	Members received the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2026.

RKEC.26.03.3.1.2	The Open Research Services Manager recommended minor changes to the RKEC.26.01.5.1.3 minute in the section on Future Direction of Open Research at UWE Bristol.
RKEC.26.03.3.1.3	Amended minutes to be approved by Chair's action on behalf of the Committee [Action: Committee Officer].
RKEC.26.03.3.2	Action sheet and matters arising Paper RKEC.26.03.02 was received.
RKEC.26.03.3.2.1	The following item was noted as being in progress: RKEC.26.01.5.1.4: A Statement of Intent on Open Research to be produced to reflect UWE's engaged research community and the development of infrastructure mechanisms. UPDATE: The PVC-RKEC is currently in discussion with the Head of Research Excellence on DORA. RKEC.25.06.4.2.5: REF preparedness: Discussion of the Code of Practice. UPDATE: Planned submission date for the Code of Practice is May 2026 (to VCE late April). Consultation period from 19 January to end of February 2026. Today is a final opportunity for RKEC member input to input on draft (see agenda item 4.1 below).
RKEC.26.03.3.2.2	
RKEC.26.03.4	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS
RKEC.26.03.4.1	Update on Research Excellence Group and REF 2029 Verbal update.
RKEC.26.03.4.1.1	The Secretary introduced an update on REF 2029 preparation. Members were reminded that this was the final opportunity to engage with the Code of Practice consultation, the period for which was noted as closing tomorrow (25 March). The Code will need to be submitted to VCE in April then a sharp turnaround for a May submission. It was reported that preparation for REF assessment will now intensify, with work progressing on the audit of impact case studies, the institutional narrative (first draft by late June), and treatment plans for Units of Assessment. There was additional
RKEC.26.03.4.1.2	
RKEC.26.03.4.1.3	

RKEC.26.03.4.1.4	discussion of the support needed for the latter, to ensure that treatment plans are unique for each UoA. RKEC was assured that REG continues its work to ensure we are REF prepared within the evolving research landscape.
RKEC.26.03.4.2	Corporate research KPI: Research metrics and bidding data Paper RKEC.26.03.03 was received.
RKEC.26.03.4.2.1	The Director of REE introduced the latest monthly report on bidding success for research and knowledge exchange (KE), reflecting information for the academic year to date. Although solid activity levels were observed, the success rate still requires improvement (albeit the recent successful £1m. CHSS bid is not factored into the latest report). KE bids were noted as variable, with predominantly small grants going into this space. It was further noted that we need to incorporate skills, horizontal as well as vertical integration, and at all levels. The Chair reported that discussions have been held with Board of Governors about their concerns related to the decrease of research and KE income. Targets have been revised downwards but further assurance is needed, together with a robust proposition on an income measure that better reflects the new landscape.
RKEC.26.03.4.2.2	
RKEC.26.03.4.2.3	
RKEC.26.03.5	ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
RKEC.26.03.5.1	Snapshot of PGR landscape Paper RKEC.26.03.04 was received.
RKEC.26.03.5.1.1	The Academic Director of the Doctoral Academy gave a detailed data-led presentation on the current state of Postgraduate Research at UWE. Statistics were reported on current PGR numbers, completions, completion rates, withdrawals, academic staff student ratios, and where we sit within the sector on these and other key variables. The following observations and questions were noted: 1) In the current landscape, PGR is framed as an area of national skills development and innovation.
RKEC.26.03.5.1.2	
RKEC.26.03.5.1.3	

RKEC.26.03.5.1.5	2) The UKRI “New Deal for PGR” (2023) states that this form of study “must evolve to ensure it continues to meet the needs of government, funders, research organisations, employers across the whole economy, society, and the researchers and innovators themselves.” 3) Opportunities exist for regional clustering and leaning more into the strategic alignment of our public research. 4) Positive PGR completion rates are the result of previous investment but understanding why incompletions still occur is important. 5) A holistic overview of PGR funding opportunities would be more beneficial for students than simply rushing to meet the next deadline. 6) How can we engage a range of different partners to develop Partnership PhDs? How can we implement these at scale and at speed? 7) Preparation for PRES 2027 will involve local understanding, new configurations of expertise, and discussions with School Directors on supervisory capacity. 8) An uncoupling of full doctoral degrees into units could attract industry. It was agreed that there are challenges ahead, especially as regards commercial aspects (where more nuanced financial data would be useful), but there is a lot to be positive about in this space, and it was re-affirmed that doctoral work is fundamental to the University’s mission.
RKEC.26.03.6	ITEMS FOR ASSURANCE
RKEC.26.03.6.1	Research Strategy risk Paper RKEC.26.03.05 was received.
RKEC.26.03.6.1.1	The Secretary and Deputy Chair presented the latest risk descriptor for research strategy.
RKEC.26.03.6.1.2	Members continued to be positive about the integration of research governance and compliance elements within the main research strategy register, and noted positive activity on the research culture, external funding and realization of impact threats. However, critical actions are not yet at the level where RKEC can be fully assured in relation to external income.

RKEC.26.03.6.2	University Ethics and Integrity Committee: Research Ethics Applications Paper RKEC.26.03.06 was received.
RKEC.26.03.6.2.1	The Academic Governance Manager gave members a data-led update on research ethics applications and associated activity overseen by UEIC.
RKEC.26.03.6.2.2	The Committee that noted that average processing times have been falling in 2025-26. A streamlined process for scrutinising applications at College level, implemented in mid-January 2026, was praised by members, particularly for improving the 'time to value' metric on assessing lower risk applications.
RKEC.26.03.6.2.3	Members were pleased to note improvements in process with lower risk applications. However, it was flagged for further attention that there is not much difference between medium and high-risk applications in the CHSS CREC, with medium risks taking only 2 days on average less than high risk [Action: UEIC Chair].
RKEC.26.03.7	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
RKEC.26.03.7.1	Chair's actions Paper RKEC.26.03.07 was received.
RKEC.26.03.7.1.1	It was noted that no approvals or decisions were taken under Chair's action since the previous meeting.
RKEC.26.03.7.2	External environment scan Paper RKEC.26.03.08 was received.
RKEC.26.03.7.2.1	The Committee noted a scan of recent external factors that potentially impact upon research, knowledge and enterprise at UWE, and which would merit attention going forward. Specific factors included: 1) An update on UKRI: restructuring, AI Strategy etc. 2) Geopolitical context: disruption, impediments, costs. 3) Public sector workforce planning which links to HE (Defence Industrial Strategy skills package) 4) An update on Horizon Europe. 5) Shifts in UK Health & Global Health Research Funding (NIHR).

RKEC.26.03.7.3	Health and safety update Verbal update.
RKEC.26.03.7.3.1	The CATE Dean of Research and Enterprise reported that her College's RKE Committee recently discussed the importance of health and safety to the Schools. There is ongoing work to facilitate best practice in this area.
RKEC.26.03.7.4	Library and Learning Services report Paper RKEC.26.03.09 was received.
RKEC.26.03.7.4.1	The Open Research Services Manager assured RKEC on latest activity, including updates on the impact of UWE's Research Publications Policy, the new REF Open Access Policy, the UKRI open access block grant, and the Frenchay Library "Safepoint" for accessing sensitive research data.
RKEC.26.03.7.5	Consultancy Framework Paper RKEC.26.03.10 was received.
RKEC.26.03.7.5.1	Members noted a framework developed to help colleagues with Knowledge Exchange career progression, drive key metrics, and assist in the creation of economic and societal impact across the RISE agenda.
RKEC.26.03.7.6	Advanced Manufacturing, Security and Defence Paper RKEC.26.03.11 was received.
RKEC.26.03.7.6.1	Members were made aware of the statement, now published on the UWE website, setting out the University's position in working with the defence sector.
RKEC.26.03.7.7	REE and the support it can offer Paper RKEC.26.03.12 was received.
RKEC.26.03.7.7.1	Members received a detailed slide presentation, for onward sharing to their respective teams, on the support and services offered by Research and External Engagement (REE).
RKEC.26.03.8	RKEC BUSINESS
RKEC.26.03.8.1	Audit of Chair's actions Verbal update.

RKEC.26.03.8.1.1	The CATE Dean of Research and Enterprise volunteered to undertake the annual review of decisions taken by Chair's action in 2025/26.
RKEC.26.03.9	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
RKEC.26.03.9.1	The elected research-active representative (CATE) raised the issue of timely sign-off of contractual project and consultancy work. Colleagues in Contracts will be consulted, and an initial dataset will be brought to a future meeting of RKEC [Action: Secretary/Committee Officer].
RKEC.26.03.10	DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS
RKEC.26.03.10.1	Next meeting date for academic year 2025/26: • 18 June 2026