



Academic Board

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29 January 2026 in Room 7X111 on Frenchay Campus.

Present: Amanda Coffey (Chair), Mary Cramp, Jenni Crossley, Beth Daniels, Olena Doran, Charlotte Edmunds, Pujan Ghosh, Marc Griffiths, Bernhard Gross, John Hancock, Enda Hayes, Khadiza Hossain, Tracey John (Secretary), Jessica Lamond, Daniela Paddeu, Jenna Pandeli, Carinna Parraman, Noelle Quenivet, Darren Reynolds, Phillipa Shelton, Andrew Simpson, Elizabeth Westlake

Apologies: Gerhard Kemp

In attendance: Hannah Cavender-Deere, Pete Sutherland, David Young (Officer)

RKEC.26.01.1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
RKEC.26.01.1.1	New members were welcomed to the Committee. Apologies were noted in the usual way.
RKEC.26.01.1.2	No declarations of interest were noted.
RKEC.26.01.2	DEEP DIVE
RKEC.26.01.2.1	Landscape and Planning for Research Funding <i>Presentation was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.2.1.1	The Director of REE gave the Committee a presentation on changing external factors and opportunities that exist going forward.
RKEC.26.01.2.1.2	The main external factor was noted as being the Government's shifting priorities as regards the sector. Universities face greater scrutiny to ensure they are fulfilling their role as proactive drivers for growth, innovation and collaboration. Institutions also need to

	demonstrate a return on investment (ROI) for the QR funding they receive.
RKEC.26.01.2.1.3	Specifically, impact needs to be evidenced in three government priority funding areas (or “buckets”): 1. curiosity driven areas; 2. focus on priority research areas; 3. support for innovative companies/scale-ups. Robust and real-time reporting will need to be aligned to these new Research England priorities.
RKEC.26.01.2.1.4	UWE’s current QR allocations is circa £6.8m annually (based on continued calibration to the REF 2021 results). As a flexible and responsive way to tackle the emerging challenges and opportunities, the University will take a three-year strategic approach (2026-2029) to investing this QR allocation.
RKEC.26.01.2.1.5	There will need to be a clear alignment to our strengths: our RISE agenda and Beacons of research excellence, our need for high-quality (3* or 4*) outputs for REF 2029, and our core commitment to UWE’s people and research environment (v/z the Researcher Development Concordat).
RKEC.26.01.2.1.6	Also introduced to RKEC members was a proposal for a two-pillar research investment framework. Pillar 1 focuses on enabling research that is aligned with our Research Strategy, our research Beacons and RISE. Pillar 2 is structured around three distinct pathways, each aligned to a researcher's career stage and development needs. These internal schemes are designed to work together to help UWE be more strategic, give our researchers greater clarity, grow the research environment, and facilitate better reporting on ROI.
RKEC.26.01.2.1.7	In conclusion, members agreed that there is an overriding need to think differently in this new research landscape. It is imperative we are more strategic, that we take the long view, with clearly aligned objectives, being proportionate in our spend, using the correct language to be explicitly accountable to UKRI, while simultaneously retaining the necessary flexibility to capitalise on opportunities. The Committee expressed a strong recommendation to push ahead ambitiously and at pace, while remaining responsive to the concerns of our researchers.
RKEC.26.01.3	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

RKEC.26.01.3.1	Previous minutes <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.01 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.3.1.1	Members received the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2025. They were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.
RKEC.26.01.3.2	Action sheet and matters arising <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.02 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.3.2.1	The following item was noted as being in progress: <i>RKEC.25.06.4.2.5 REF preparedness - Discussion of the Code of Practice to be included on the 2025/26 Business Plan and scheduled for the October 2025 meeting.</i> UPDATE: Planned submission date for the REF Code of Practice is May 2026 (to VCE late April). Draft CoP discussed at REG on 14 Jan 2026, with consultation period 19 Jan through end of Feb 2026. Further discussion at today's RKEC, with shared link to draft CoP (see agenda item 4.1). Update also going to Academic Board in February.
RKEC.26.01.4	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS
RKEC.26.01.4.1	Update on Research Excellence Group (and REF 2029) <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.03 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.4.1.1	The Head of Research Excellence introduced an update on REF 2029 preparation, Research England updates, link to draft Code of Practice, and appendices.
RKEC.26.01.4.1.2	The REF unpauing in December 2025 was noted, together with the replacement of People, Culture and Environment (PCE) with Strategy, People and Research Environment (SPRE). It was noted that formal consultation on the REF Code of Practice has commenced, with research staff encouraged to engage. The agreed CoP will need to be submitted by May 2026.
RKEC.26.01.4.1.3	RKEC was assured that REG continues its work to ensure we are prepared within the evolving REF landscape.
RKEC.26.01.4.2	Corporate research KPI: Research metrics and bidding data <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.04 was received.</i>

RKEC.26.01.4.2.1	The Secretary, in her role as Director of REE, introduced an insight piece on end of 2024/25 data with an overview of strategic work being taken.
RKEC.26.01.4.2.2	RKEC received the latest monthly report on bidding success for research and KE, reflecting information for the academic year to date. Although it was acknowledged that the University is down on submissions, the Colleges expressed the importance of the quality of bids, the evolving focus on interdisciplinary activity, and the need for the researcher pipeline to strengthen so that more sizeable (plus £200,000) bids become the norm.
RKEC.26.01.4.2.3	A summary of HEBCIS (Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey) activity was also distributed, and its importance as a current driver of HEIF income highlighted. General stability in the 2024/25 data indicates we can expect a similar HEIF allocation to last year.
RKEC.26.01.4.2.4	Specific HEBCIS submission categories were then discussed. It was noted that there is currently significant activity across the sector relating to intellectual property (IP) commercialisation. A project with SpinOutWest is ongoing to develop SpinOutWest 2.0, a regional initiative designed to support the management and commercialisation of IP within universities.
RKEC.26.01.4.2.5	It was noted that the Board of Governors have raised concerns about the fall of research and KE income and are keen to understand the reasons. The PVC RKE has discussed this at the People and Academic Assurance Committee. It was noted that further work is underway to strengthen research income.
RKEC.26.01.4.3	College research updates – thematic feedback and highlighted best practice for supporting research <i>Papers RKEC.26.01.05-07 were received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.4.3.1	The College Deans of Research and Enterprise were invited to report on research bidding, key developments, and the general research landscape.
RKEC.26.01.4.3.2	A shift towards quality over volume in research bidding has been observed, with greater emphasis on collaboration—both within and across Colleges—and growing interest in interdisciplinary bids. Colleges are prioritising the building of research communities through the launch of research cafés and cross-college networking activities.

RKEC.26.01.4.3.3	In CATE, the focus continues to be on prioritising the quality of research bids. The College is increasing the level of support offered to researchers as they prepare their applications, including the use of REE-led training opportunities and thinking about 'peer support'—upstream from 'peer review'. In addition, there is sustained work to enhance the PGR community and to foster a stronger sense of belonging among doctoral candidates. A Horizon Europe workshop was recently held in REE involving several national contact points and was open to participants across the wider University; the event attracted around 40–50 attendees.
RKEC.26.01.4.3.4	In CBL, efforts are being directed toward building a stronger research culture. A research café will launch shortly with the aim of fostering connections between researchers across the college. The RISE event held in the autumn was noted, helping to bring together researchers working in related areas, with several projects emerging as a result. Interest in PhD scholarships continues to be very strong, with many schemes receiving more than 200 applications each. These scholarships have been deliberately aligned to recognised research groups and centres rather than individual supervisors
RKEC.26.01.4.3.5	In CHSS, the number of research bids submitted has been smaller; however, the bids produced have been more developed and larger in scope. It was reported that, during the first six months of the current year, the value of bids submitted by CHSS was 45% higher than the value submitted across the whole of the previous year. Although the number of bids has been smaller, they have been more developed and significantly larger in scale, resulting in increased overall bid value and activity. The College remains on track to meet or exceed last year's total research income. Looking ahead, CHSS intends to expand the number of cross-disciplinary bids submitted in collaboration with other colleges.
RKEC.26.01.4.4	Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers – update <i>RKEC.26.01.08 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.4.4.1	PVC RKE presented an update to assure the Committee that the published plan to implement UWE's institutional commitment to the Concordat was on schedule.

RKEC.26.01.4.4.2	A new institutional lead for the Concordat has been identified, with a delivery group to be formed shortly. This work will feed directly into the development of the new SPRE. The new research progression scheme has launched, receiving positive early engagement.
RKEC.26.01.4.4.3	Work is also underway to grow and support the PGR community. The intention is to stimulate and revive PhD partnerships going forward. As part of wider discussions on capacity and growth, there is also an in-principle agreement to create a dedicated PGR space. This will not function as a study area but rather as a hub where PGRs can connect, exchange ideas, and build community. Early work will focus on establishing the space, with the hope that it will ultimately be managed by the PGR community itself. Working with the Doctoral Academy, the aim is to curate a lively calendar of events throughout the year.
RKEC.26.01.4.4.4	Members raised the issue of supervisory capacity, noting that Schools will be contacted in the coming weeks to provide a broad indication of supervisory resource, taking account of SRR margins. It was noted that this work sits alongside a longer-term initiative aimed at expanding PGR provision internationally.
RKEC.26.01.4.4.5	Discussion also covered ongoing work on improving demographic data of UWE's research community. The new approach aims to inform strategic planning and to provide insight into diversity and intersectionality. Initial headline figures show that 28% of research staff are Global Majority. More detailed analysis to follow.
RKEC.26.01.4.4.6	Additionally, work is underway to establish an organising committee for the upcoming Festival of Research, intended to enhance research culture and community engagement.
RKEC.26.01.5	ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
RKEC.26.01.5.1	Future Direction of Open Research at UWE Bristol <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.09 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.5.1.1	The Open Research Services Manager introduced a paper that discussed UWE's current approach to open research, with recommendations on next steps to take. It was observed that open research is becoming increasingly central to how universities demonstrate research integrity, transparency, inclusive research, and societal impact.

RKEC.26.01.5.1.2	Members were positive about recommending actions that are proactive, value-driven, and work towards a deeper, strategic commitment beyond basic REF compliance.
RKEC.26.01.5.1.3	In the discussion it was noted that co-ordination of information is key. A cultural shift, with greater staff and student awareness, needs to accompany the design of any new approach that is taken to open research.
RKEC.26.01.5.1.4	It was concluded that an engaged research community and the development of infrastructure mechanisms need to form the basis of a Statement of Intent on Open Research [Action: PVC RKE).
RKEC.26.01.5.1.5	Also, further discussions to be held on UWE becoming a signatory of DORA (the Declaration on Research Assessment).
RKEC.26.01.5.2	University Ethics and Integrity Committee – focus on research governance risk <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.10 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.5.2.1	The Chair of UEIC gave RKEC members assurance on UEIC activity to manage risk in the research governance space.
RKEC.26.01.5.2.2	The appointment of the new RIGE Manager has afforded an opportunity to make research governance processes clearer, more flexible, less bureaucratic, yet still compliant with external agencies (such as UKRIO). The new procedure for research misconduct currently being re-written was specifically discussed in this connection.
RKEC.26.01.5.2.3	It was agreed in discussion that the streamlining of processes is important in driving a positive research culture. The UEIC Chair invited RKEC members to contact the Chair, Secretary or RIGE Manager if they have an issue they would like to raise at UEIC.
RKEC.26.01.6	ITEMS FOR ASSURANCE
RKEC.26.01.6.1	Research Strategy risk <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.11 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.6.1.1	The Secretary and Deputy Secretary presented the risk register for research strategy, following the annual deep dive.

RKEC.26.01.6.1.2	RKEC was positive about the integration of ethics and integrity elements within the main research strategy register. It was noted that substantive discussions already undertaken at the present meeting of RKEC aligned well with the composite risk threats illustrated on the descriptor. Future discussion needs to similarly capture the risks, opportunities and potential engines of change.
RKEC.26.01.6.1.3	Members confirmed they were assured on the ongoing management of research risk. Even though critical threats remain (e.g. research funding, realisation of research impact), action is accelerating in key areas.
RKEC.26.01.7	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
RKEC.26.01.7.1	Chair's actions <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.12 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.7.1.1	It was noted that the following approvals or decisions were taken under Chair's action since the previous meeting. 1) Approval of a proposal to update the membership section of the Terms of Reference for the Doctoral Academy Sub-Committee (DASC).
RKEC.26.01.7.2	External environment scan <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.13 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.7.2.1	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) Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper and impact on research 2) Gov't's International Education Strategy 3) UKRI "budget allocations" / R&D "buckets" 4) Rollout of West of England Growth Strategy
RKEC.26.01.7.3	Health and safety update <i>Verbal update.</i>
RKEC.26.01.7.3.1	No update to report.

RKEC.26.01.7.4	Library and Learning Services report <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.14 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.7.4.1	The Open Research Services Manager assured RKEC on latest activity, including an update on the successful conclusion of negotiations with the Big 5 academic publishers, and a reminder that the new REF Open Access policy is now live (with authors asked to continue to upload their accepted manuscripts to PIMS at the point of acceptance).
RKEC.26.01.7.5	Annual Statement of Research Integrity 2024/25 <i>Paper RKEC.26.01.15 was received.</i>
RKEC.26.01.7.5.1	Members noted the statement endorsed at UEIC and Academic Board en route to PAAC and Board of Governors.
RKEC.26.01.8	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
RKEC.26.01.8.1	The Chair expressed thanks to all staff for the successful recent visit of HRH Prince of Wales to BRL and Launch Space.
RKEC.26.01.09	DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS
RKEC.26.01.09.1	Next meeting dates for academic year 2025/26: • 24 March 2026 • 18 June 2026