



Academic Board

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2022 (in Room 7X111)

Membership:

Present: Prof M Boddy (Chair), Prof R Bolden, Prof O Doran, Dr L Duong, B Ekaette, Dr A Geary, Dr L Goodwin, Prof D Greenham, Prof J Hancock, Prof H Hickman, Prof C Hobbs, T John (Secretary), Dr S Klein, Prof V Kumar, Prof J Lamond, Prof D Qualtrough, P Shelton, Prof M Smith, Prof A Varadi, Prof N Willey, N Button (Officer)

Apologies: Prof A Coffey, Prof C Hobbs, Dr M Kirjavainen-Morgan, Dr H Moyes

In attendance: Dr S Sargeant (item 1.2)

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RKEC22.09.1	WELCOMES AND APOLOGIES
RKEC22.09.1.1	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, noting the apologies in the usual way.
RKEC22.09.1.2	ERE presentation The Expanding Research Excellence (ERE) was first launched during 2021 with four clusters funded, supporting cross-disciplinary areas and building for the future. Following three clusters presenting at the previous RKEC meetings, the fourth and final presented to this meeting. This presentation focused on the research around microplastics. RKEC welcomed the update and commended the progress made on this research project.
RKEC22.09.2	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING
RKEC22.09.2.1	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022 as a full and accurate record, with a minor correction on the Chair of the Human Tissue Sub-Committee.

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RKEC.22.09.2.2	There was an action arising relating to publishers and the Library – it was confirmed that a briefing was being compiled on best practice for journal articles.
RKEC22.09.3	ANNUAL COMMITTEE ITEMS
RKEC.22.09.3.1	RKEC Terms of Reference
RKEC22.09.3.1.1	Members noted the Committee’s new Terms of Reference which had been slightly amended since 2021/22 to reflect the changes in the University structure. RKEC also flagged the need to update the membership with the relevant members of the Human Tissue and Animal Welfare & Ethics Sub-Committees.
RKEC.22.09.3.2	RKEC Business Plan and Priorities 2022/23
RKEC.22.09.3.2	<p>RKEC considered a draft business plan and list of priorities for the 2022/23 academic year. These would subsequently be considered and approved by Academic Board. The focus for the year would be the implementation of the Research Strategy, learning from REF2021, the Research Readiness Review outcomes, and taking forward the recommendations of the PWC research governance audit.</p> <p>RKEC commented adding the additional themes of the UKRI Research People Culture and Strategy – there was a small pot of QR funding for activities to take forward that Strategy – and the audit from UKRI with an accompanying roadmap with the priorities for the next three years.</p> <p>RKEC members were asked to notify the Officer of additional agenda items as they arose throughout the year.</p>
RKEC22.09.4	STANDING AGENDA ITEMS
RKEC22.09.4.1	Chair’s Report
RKEC22.09.4.1.1	<p>The Chair presented the report, noting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UWE had gone up 12 places in <i>The Times Good University Guide</i>, which had been primarily driven by an improvement in research metrics. - Allocation from QR and HEIF funding had increased by nearly £900,000, again reflecting improvement in the REF scores. - The UKRI audit had highlighted some areas of improvement including ensuring legitimate expenditure and timesheets (an issue that was being taken forward with colleagues in Finance). RKEC noted the importance of ensuring that researchers time was being properly accounted for and the accompanying challenges around the workload model.
RKEC22.09.4.2	Research Readiness Review Update

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RKEC22.09.4.2.1	The Chair updated RKEC on the draft headlines from the Research Readiness Review, noting that some actions were already being implemented, for example, around the PGR Improvement Plan. Internal funding streams were being rolled forward into the next academic year. The final discussion around the findings would take place on 20 October and a fuller update on the final outcomes would be brought to the next meeting of RKEC.
RKEC.22.09.4.3	External Bidding Data
RKEC.22.09.4.3.1	RKEC noted the bidding data and that additional information would be circulated on the latest situation. There was a rising trend of income despite Covid impact on recent bids, with research income in August running at three times the level of the previous year.
RKEC22.09.5	ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
RKEC22.09.5.1	Research in Colleges and Schools
RKEC.22.09.5.1.1	RKEC considered the latest developments in mapping the research structures onto the new system of Colleges and Schools. Research leads at College and School level were still in the process of being appointed and there was an ongoing discussion about where best to situate PGR within the new structure, with the underlying principle that it should be integrated into those structures. RKEC noted that REF Unit of Assessment Leads were yet to be appointed and there was an outstanding issue of the College-level input into School-level research roles.
RKEC.22.09.5.2	PWC Internal Audit: Issues Arising
RKEC.22.09.5.2.1	RKEC were updated on the issues arising from the PWC internal audit of the University's research governance. It had been flagged that many policies and guidelines were now significantly dated, and that there would be a stream of updates and new processes that would need to be considered by RKEC over its next few meetings.
RKEC.22.09.5.3	UWE Handbook of Research Ethics
RKEC.22.09.5.3.1	RKEC considered an update to the UWE Handbook of Research Ethics. Comments had been given by members of the Research Ethics Committee. It was noted that the format would be online with a linkable contents page but that improvements in usability would continue to be considered. There was a slight amendment raised to add a line about taking into consideration that PGRs were researchers in training and that there were potentially additional risks that meant

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	<p>that certain types of research should not be conducted by PhD students.</p> <p>RKEC approved the amended version, as well as the creation of an undergraduate research online resource for project supervisors to confirm that ethics had been considered for individual students and that appropriate ethical training had been undertaken.</p>
RKEC.22.09.5.4	AWESC & HTSC Quality Management Systems
RKEC.22.09.5.4.1	<p>RKEC considered and approved updated Quality Management Systems for both Animal Welfare & Ethics and Human Tissue. Both were issues that were taken seriously by both the Vice-Chancellor's Executive and the Board of Governors and it was important that the University had systems that reflected the latest practice and regulations in these areas. Both sub-committees had had an opportunity to comment on the draft documents.</p> <p>RKEC noted that while no specific issues of concern had arisen during the process of producing these updated documents, additional training needs may be required and that applications relevant to these areas would be monitored to ensure that additional issues were being picked up and addressed.</p>
RKEC.22.09.5.5	Women Researchers' Mentoring Scheme Report
RKEC.22.09.5.5.1	<p>RKEC considered the report, noting that the Scheme was active again. There were challenges in demonstrating impact even though the Scheme was valued. An outcome of the Research Readiness Review would be the setting up of an EDI Working Group that would pick up many of the issues raised by the Mentoring Scheme Report.</p>
	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
RKEC22.09.6.1	UKRI Latest Reports and Delivery Plans Presentation
RKEC.22.09.6.1.1	The reports were starred and not discussed.
RKEC.22.09.6.2	Research England Funding Settlement
RKEC.22.09.6.2.1	The reports were starred and not discussed.
RKEC22.09.7	HEALTH AND SAFETY
RKEC22.09.7.1	There were no items discussed.
RKEC22.09.8	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
RKEC22.09.8.1	There was no other business.

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	DATES OF MEETINGS 2022-23 Wednesday 16 November Wednesday 8 February Wednesday 26 April Wednesday 21 June

Actions