



Academic Board

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 23 October 2019

14.00 – 16.30: Dartington Suite, Frenchay Campus

Membership:

Present: Professor Martin Boddy (Chair), Professor Richard Bolden, Richard Bond, Amanda Conway, Professor Myra Conway, Professor Olena Doran, Hazel Edwards, Dr Farnon Ellwood, Professor Catherine Hobbs, Tracey John, Professor Vikas Kumar, Heather Moyes, Jane Newton, Professor Mel Smith, Professor Neil Willey, Alison Vaughton (Officer)

Apologies: Professor Lauren Devine, Richard Falle, Professor Di Harcourt, Mandy Rose, Dr Heidi Williamson.

In attendance: Gerry Scott, HR (for item 10 (minute no RKEC19.10.05)) and Dr Laura Fogg Rogers (for item 11 (minute no RKEC19.10.06))

MINUTES OF THE MEETING	
RKEC19.10.01	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
RKEC19.10.01.01	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019.
RKEC19.10.01.02	RKEC 19.06.32 – The Chair of AWEC requested a clarification on UWE staff involvement in animal research to recognise that while staff may be engaged in research with animals away from UWE (and covered by the licences of other HEIs) no such activity takes place at UWE. All animal research activity is monitored by AWEC. The minutes would be amended to reflect this. Action: Officer
	MATTERS ARISING
RKEC19.10.01.03	All actions had been completed.
RKEC19.10.02	Terms of Reference, Composition and Membership

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RKEC19.10.02.01	The Chair explained the background to the changes to the Terms of Reference for all Academic Board committees. He was aware that the changes had prompted significant debate, particularly for the Research Ethics, Human Tissue and Animal Welfare and Ethics committees, and these concerns would be taken back to Academic Board. Most of the issues raised had already been discussed.
RKEC19.10.02.02	The Chair of the HTSC advised that members of the committee had expressed very strong feelings, and wanted to ensure that the issues raised, including on general governance issues and potential risk to the University, were made clear to Academic Board. It was proposed that comments be collated for discussion outside this meeting, and a set of issues compiled. See RKEC19.10.09.
RKEC19.10.02.03	The Committee noted the changes relating to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, notably four new research active representatives, one from each Faculty (to be elected), and a new Students' Union elected officer, nominated by the Students' Union President. The Committee further noted changes to its purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive reports from Faculty Boards in respect of research, KE and enterprise • ensure the postgraduate student experience matches expectations set and is subject to continuous improvement • ensure active consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion in the conduct of its business • evaluate annually its own performance and that of its Sub-Committees to ensure academic governance arrangements enhance institutional performance and add value.
RKEC19.10.02.04	The Chair explained the reasoning behind some of the changes: enhancing the role of Faculty Boards, tightening up on formal governance, recognising that students are at the heart of University activity, and the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion.
RKEC19.10.02.05	The move to formal 3-year terms of office for elected members across all committees was noted not to operate retrospectively, but to begin from the start of the current academic year. Members were uncertain about the proposed annual turnover of non-elected representatives (ie those nominated by Executive Deans) and asked that this be made clearer. It was understood that the intention of this move was to improve the mix of members.
RKEC19.10.02.06	The Chair reported that the notice of election for vacancies had been published. The Officer reported that following an email invitation by the Chair, 19 PGR students had expressed an interest in serving on the Committee. She was in discussion with the Student Union about taking this forward.
RKEC19.10.03	Chair's Report

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RKEC19.10.03.01	<p>The Chair reported that Chris Skidmore, Minister for Universities, had twice recently referenced UWE in speeches, and had (unusually) written to Research England Executive Chair, David Sweeney. The Officer would circulate the letter to members. The Chair noted that UWE's portfolio of research and business engagement aligned very closely to the Government's present priorities, with an overwhelming shift from blue skies type research to knowledge exchange, enterprise, business innovation, etc and that QR support would continue.</p> <p>Action: Officer</p>
RKEC19.10.04	REF2021
RKEC19.10.04.01	<p>The REF Manager gave an overview of progress. UWE's Code of Practice had been submitted in June and had been approved subject to two minor clarifications. He stressed how much more important Codes of Practice would be for this REF than for previous exercises, as they determine how each institution implements the REF processes, including identifying staff with significant responsibility for research (SRR). The full UWE Code is available on the intranet and would shortly be uploaded to the UWE external webpages.</p>
RKEC19.10.04.02	<p>Since July a mock process had been conducted. This had established that the work of more staff would feature in the University's submission than for REF2014, as a consequence of the more inclusive approach. It was anticipated that still more would be added, including new staff. The overall number of outputs to be submitted was expected to be similar to last time.</p>
RKEC19.10.04.03	<p>The systems for declaring individual circumstances and for making appeals were now available to staff. Final decisions would be the responsibility of the REF Strategy Implementation Group (REF SIG) to inform decisions ahead of the March deadline.</p>
RKEC19.10.04.04	<p>The Chair summarised that there were some areas where there was still significant work to be done, but by and large progress was on target. Richard Bond and his team, together with the Unit of Assessment leads and impact team, were doing an excellent job.</p>
RKEC19.10.05	Technicians' Commitment – One Year On
RKEC19.10.05.01	<p>Ms Gerry Scott gave a presentation on the Technicians' Commitment (TC). UWE had been one of the founding signatories and recognised the need to work specifically on visibility – both internally and externally - and on career development. A 24-month action plan, to June 2020, had been prepared with the intention of improving the working life of all technicians and was required to be published on the UWE webpages. UWE has 186 technicians, of whom 68 (37%) are</p>

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	female. This compares with 58% female staff across the whole of UWE. The equalities data would be investigated.
RKEC19.10.05.02	The Technicians conference, held at Glenside in July, had been very well attended, and very well received, with an address from the VC and keynote speech from Kelly Vere, Higher Education Engagement Manager & Technician Commitment Lead.
RKEC19.10.05.03	During its first year the TC's focus on visibility had included representation on URKEC and LTSEC. In the context of research, technicians are often closely involved in conducting research, and deserve to be recognised for this, in planning, operations, and publications.
RKEC19.10.05.04	Technicians were keen to have equality with academics, including clear career paths, and routes into research and KE pathways. Recognition of technical staff and their skills should include listing in Departmental staffing. It was suggested that the possibility of a doctorate route for technicians with publications might be explored. There may also be external opportunities for technicians, for example Research Council fellowships.
RKEC19.10.06	Women in Research Mentoring Scheme (WRMS)
RKEC19.10.06.01	Dr Laura Fogg-Rogers, co-chair of WRMS, gave a presentation on the evaluation of the scheme . She explained how the scheme works and highlighted the varying take-up across faculties. The satisfaction rate for attendees was very high overall, based on both qualitative and quantitative feedback. Dr Fogg-Rogers particularly praised the support from Fiona Watt in RBI.
RKEC19.10.06.02	Members queried the number of scheme participants but were informed that this was very much dependant on the number of applications and on mentors coming forward. The workload allocation for the scheme was 6WLBs for mentors, with no bundles for mentees.
RKEC19.10.06.03	Dr Fogg-Rogers confirmed that thought had been given to extending the scheme to other minority groups, but that this was beyond the scope of the current committee. The scheme, as currently conceived, was particularly of value for individuals in part-time roles and those returning to work following parental breaks, providing support to talented staff, encouraging and helping with career pathways, and promotion opportunities.
RKEC19.10.06.04	The Chair welcomed the report and asked members to spread the word about the scheme, encouraging both mentors and staff who would benefit from the scheme.
RKEC19.10.07	KEF and Industrial Strategy

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RKEC19.10.07.01	The Director of RBI updated the Committee on preparations for the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF).
RKEC19.10.07.02	UKRI were due provide an additional £40M across the sector from Easter 2020. This would require significantly greater accountability with an increasing focus on HEBCIS, with KEF essentially an analysis of HEBCIS. UWE should be very well placed to access more of this funding provided impact could be evidenced and demonstrated. The first KEF report was due to be published in December, and while it was not the intention that Research England would publish league tables, these would nevertheless be created. Members were encouraged to respond to any requests for information from RBI to support the HEBCIS submission. The Director, RBI further explained that there was little 'noise' in the sector about the Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC) but that it was expected to make an appearance shortly. Reviews would be conducted over the next two years of the HEIF strategy and HEBCIS. In summary, greater accountability was required, with a clearer focus on creating impact.
RKEC19.10.07.03	There was an increasing emphasis on the civic engagement agenda, and the potential benefits for students involved in KE. This presented great opportunities for UWE.
RKEC19.10.07.04	Some uplift in general HEIF was anticipated, but it was hoped that UWE might be able to secure increased funding. To be able to do this it would be increasingly important to be able to evidence impact.
RKEC19.10.07.05	<p>Mrs John further reported that £50M of proposals had been submitted very recently, with outcomes due in January. These included a large bid to the Research England Strength in Places call (regional bid) on digital innovation in professional services.</p> <p>A staff enterprise programme was being set up, due to be launched in November, and offering support to staff to mirror that already available to students.</p>
RKEC19.10.07.06	<p>One member questioned the potential duplication between impact in KEF and REF. While these represented different types of impact, and duplication would likely only feature in the narratives and represent complementarity rather than overlap, the Chair proposed that this would merit further consideration, possibly after the current REF cycle, to see if they might be better aligned.</p> <p>A member requested clear guidance on how HEIF funds could and/or should be spent, but Mrs John stated that it was preferable to clarify the impact being sought, and to allow funds be used appropriately to achieve this.</p>
RKEC19.10.08	Library Services

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RKEC19.10.08.01	Mrs Conway, Head of Library Research, Performance and Internal Communications, presented paper RKEC19.10.12 and explained that the Plan S initiative was progressing, with more funders now backing it, including UKRI. In January 2021 there would be a move from the traditional journal model, with articles from publicly funded research having to be openly available upon publication without embargo. Many more publishers were now offering deals in what was seen as a very positive step from publishers. Details could be found on the Library's webpages. Researchers planning to publish would now have greater opportunity to do so via open access. Overall this presented a move towards paying to publish rather than to access research and its findings.
RKEC19.10.08.02	Mrs Conway reported that the UKRI grant remained available for Research Council funded work. She confirmed that the Library's budget would need to be increased during the transition from the subscription model to the publishing model.
RKEC19.10.08.03	The research repository has been migrated to a new system – Worktribe, as part of the first stage in the wider PIMS (Project Information Management System) project. There were a number of known issues and members were encouraged to contact the Library Team if any issues were identified.
RKEC19.10.09	Sub-Committees
RKEC19.10.09.01	Professor Conway stated that all three of the chairs of the governance sub-committees, the UREC, the HTSC and the AWEC were in agreement in their concerns about the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference.
RKEC19.10.09.02	The HTSC had concerns over the exclusion of the Research Governance Manager and Associate Head of Research (HAS) as members of the committee. Both individuals were critical to the operation of the committee. She questioned how the revised terms of reference had evolved and why there had been no consultation with the chairs of the three committees. She further expressed concern over the issue of 3 year terms – noting that members should be experts in their field rather than members by rotation, and that it was a struggle to recruit members anyway. Once on board, members build up a huge amount of expertise and could better inform policy-making. She worried that if people left the committee their expertise would be lost. Nevertheless, she was very much open to new people joining the committee. In the case of the Research Governance Manager, this individual brings knowledge and commitment to the committees, and alerts them to the associated legal risks.
RKEC19.10.09.03	The Chair acknowledged the points raised and stated that he would take these forward. The 3-year term, in particular, may work better for other committees where the pool of potential members is larger. It

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	may be possible to make a special case for the HTSC and AWEC, but was equally important to ensure that membership of the committees remained open. With regards to the Research Governance Manager, where the business of the committee was in their area of responsibility, they should absolutely be in attendance, but as independent advisors, and not as voting members. The Chair stressed that there was no intention to remove the Research Governance Manager from committees, but to confirm that their attendance was in an advisory capacity.
RKEC19.10.09.04	The Chair of AWEC noted that the Research Governance Manager was currently the Deputy Chair of the Committee and removing decision-making capacity would be problematical. The Research Governance Manager contributed very strongly to the running of the committee. Professor Boddy stated that comments could be taken to Academic Board, but that they should be depersonalised, and account must be taken of potential conflicts of interest.
RKEC19.10.09.05	The Chair of URKEC confirmed that most of the issues raised by the Chairs of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), Human Tissue Sub-Committee (HTSC) and Animal Welfare and Ethics Committee (AWEC) in their update reports to the Committee had already been identified and considered by Academic Board. The concerns would be given further consideration ahead of final decisions being taken by Academic Board. The Officer was asked to compile a note of the concerns raised. Action: Officer
RKEC19.10.10	Faculty Updates
RKEC19.10.10.01	It was proposed that the Faculty update reports should be starred reports for today's meeting and going forwards. This was agreed as good committee and governance practice.
RKEC19.10.11	Graduate School
RKEC19.10.11.01	The Graduate School Director reported that more students (68) had been recruited this October than for the past 7 years. UWE had been successful in becoming part of the SW Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership funded by the BBSRC.
RKEC19.10.11.02	The Chair reported that at the recent RSIG awayday there had been a brief discussion on PGR strategy for the University. This would be considered in greater detail, but a useful base for discussion had been established which would be built on to reach a more strategic approach.
RKEC19.10.12	Research and Enterprise Strategy

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RKEC19.10.12.01	<p>The Chair reported that a Research and Enterprise strategy would need to be developed as a sub-strategy to UWE Strategy 2030 for submission to the Governors in March.</p> <p>The RSIG had given initial thought to this at its awayday earlier in the month, reviewing the Research 2020 strategy, together with the values and foci in Strategy 2030, specifically in the context of the changes in the HE landscape. It was hoped that a research strategy day would take place in early 2020 at which members of URKEC and other interested parties would be able to bring their thinking, building towards the R&E Strategy 2030.</p>
RKEC19.10.13	Health and Safety
RKEC19.10.13.01	The Chair proposed that more time be set aside for the discussion of Health and Safety at a future meeting.
RKEC19.10.14	Any other business
RKEC19.10.14.01	Picking up on an issue raised in the UREC Annual Report, the Associate Dean for Research in FET requested a stronger steer on research ethics training. The Officer explained that a mandatory training module had been developed over the summer months and was about to be rolled out to all academic staff in the coming weeks. This was at the request of the Board of Governors' Audit Committee. The short module was intended to provide basic training plus links to other resources, and all staff would be contacted individually, with completion monitored in the faculties.
RKEC19.10.14.02	A further question was raised about travel insurance for researchers visiting high risk areas. There had been instances of researchers being given ethical approval for work in areas where they were not insured to travel to. The Chair clarified that the role of the Research Ethics Committees was to assess the ethics of a project, while insurance was a management issue. This issue would be further considered outside the meeting.
	DATE OF NEXT MEETING Wednesday 29 January 2020, 14:00-16:30, 3A022 Frenchay

	Actions	
RKEC19.10.01.02	The Officer to amend the minutes to reflect comments by the Chair of AWEC.	AV
RKEC19.10.03.01	The Officer to circulate the letter from the Minister for Universities to the Research England Executive Chair.	AV

RKEC19.10.09.05	Compile summary of issues raised by new Terms of Reference for UREC, HTSC and AWEC.	AV
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