



Academic Board

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023 (in Room 7X111)

Membership:

Present: Prof A Coffey (Chair), Prof R Bolden, A Conway, Prof O Doran, Prof J Hancock, T John (Secretary), Prof J Lamond, Dr D Qualtrough, P Shelton, Prof A Varadi, Prof N Willey, T Corin (Officer)

Apologies: Dr L Duong, B Ekaette, Prof D Gabor, Dr A Geary, Dr L Goodwin, Prof H Hickman, Prof A Ivlevs, Dr M Kirjavainen-Morgan, Dr S Klein, Dr H Lewis-Smith, Dr H Moyes, Prof M Smith

In attendance: None

MINUTES OF THE MEETING	
RKEC23.06.1	WELCOMES AND APOLOGIES
RKEC23.06.1.1	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apologies above.
RKEC23.06.2	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING
RKEC.23.06.2.1	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 as a full and accurate record.
RKEC.23.06.2.2	The status of the action arising from the previous meeting was noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NW provided an update on the review of the equality analysis relating to the PGR Admissions Policy. A series of Doctoral Academy transition workshops, including one with the Admissions Team, had taken place and the equality analysis had been fed into the future PGR Admissions process (ACTION CLOSED).

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RKEC23.06.3

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

RKEC.23.06.3.1

Chair's Report, including external environment update

RKEC.23.06.3.1.1

- The Chair summarised the recently published Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP) report detailing key changes to the REF 2028 exercise. The following points were highlighted:
- Submission would be late 2027 (likely Nov/Dec) with results published at the end of 2028.
 - The current UoA structure was likely to be retained but slight adjustments might occur.
 - REF 2028 would move away from the submission of individuals, towards a more holistic institution submission. The submission size would be based on HESA data of staff with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR). The 2028 exercise would use a 2-year average (2025/26 and 2026/27 data) with the anticipation that future REF cycles would use the aggregate of the whole period.
 - Confirmation on how overall submission size would impact the size of each UoA was pending, but it was assumed institutions would have freedom to decide the size and shape of their UoA submissions within their defined submission envelope.
 - The 2* requirement for Impact had been removed, and the number of Impact Case Studies per UoA reduced from 2 to 1.
 - An 18-month consultation period had commenced.
 - The new component weightings would be:
 - o 50%: Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding (previously 'Outputs'), with 10% of that as broader contribution to the advancement of the discipline. 2.5 outputs per submitted FTE would be required, but there would be no direct link between individuals and outputs giving institutions greater flexibility to include outputs from those not included in the HESA return (i.e., technical, emeritus, visiting staff, etc.);
 - o 25%: Engagement and Impact including a broader contribution to civic society;
 - o 25%: People, Culture and Environment (previously Environment).
 - The University would initiate a REF audit next summer to establish and implement the necessary structures and processes.

Members commented:

- The challenge of increasing the University's submission size was acknowledged. Past HESA data would be used to sense check aspirations, and further work undertaken to establish how we increase SRR in a sustainable way

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The decoupling of individuals and outputs would provide additional opportunities to be more inclusive, but it was important to retain quality. - It was critical to continue the current arrangements of reviewing outputs and building impact case studies, - The committee would have a role in advising on the strategic direction of the REF28 submission. - As the next REF would use the HESA aggregate return across the full cycle, the University had an opportunity to move away from REF as a 'moment in time' and embed it into the long-term University strategy, with longer-term, sustained investment in the research environment.
RKEC23.06.3.2	<p>Research Readiness Review reflections, Research strategy refresh and next steps</p>
RKEC23.06.3.2.1	<p>RKEC considered a collection of papers from the Chair including reflections on Prof M Boddy's overview of outcomes of the Research Readiness Review, a research strategy refresh and next steps. Versions had been presented to Governors and were now presented to the Committee for information and comment.</p> <p>During discussion, RKEC raised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The papers could be shared with colleagues; the research strategy refresh paper was included on the upcoming Academic Board agenda. - RKEC discussed research centres and entities and their place in the new College/School structure. Deans of Research and Enterprise were developing a common framework which would include flexibility for each College but encourage Research Centres to become integral to Schools, encourage interdisciplinarity and avoid creating silos. - The heterogeneity of research structures across the Colleges was discussed, including lack of consistency in support structures, workload allocation, mix of Research Centres/Groups/labs, etc. - It was important to establish clarity around responsibility and accountability to improve research Environment and remove 'us/them' mentality for researchers not in centres. The conversation regarding line management of Research Centre Directors would be continued offline. - It was important to think strategically about research entities, how to scale up emerging fields, wind down centres at the end of their lifecycle, and maximise the return on institutional QR investment. - A task and finish group to work towards becoming a signatory of the Research Concordat would be established, and a Researchers' Forum (for contract researchers) would be

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	reinstated in due course to provide regular opportunities for the researcher voice to be heard.
RKEC.23.06.3.3	External Bidding Data
RKEC.23.06.3.3.1	RKEC received the latest external bidding data, noting that external research income was one of the ten metrics on the corporate scorecard.
RKEC23.06.4	ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
RKEC.23.06.4.1	Sub-Committee Updates
RKEC.23.06.4.1.1	<p>Sub-committee chairs were invited to present highlights from their Annual Assurance Reports. The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AWESC: The committee ran smoothly with a complete membership now including external Veterinarians who had made significant contributions. Moving forward, this subcommittee would report to the new University Ethics and Integrity Committee. Members thanked the Research Governance team for their assistance in generating the report. The Annual Assurance Report was APPROVED. - HTSC: The committee held regular meetings on teams and membership now included a CATE representative. The yearly audit looked at how to ensure best practice by UWE staff in off-site and joint projects. The previous audit had identified gaps in handover process for departing staff and procedures to close those gaps were now in place. Summer activities would include auditing mandatory training records and developing online training resources for UWE staff interested in doing research with Human Tissue. The Annual Assurance Report was APPROVED. - Members agreed more work could be done to capture research governance in the staff leavers process. <p>ACTION: Officer/Secretary to work with Human Resources to ensure Research Governance was captured in Leavers processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RESC: RESC would be superseded by the UEIC in 2023/24. Members thanked the Research Governance team for their ongoing help and support over the years. All outstanding issues would be closed at a final meeting in September. <p>RKEC would continue to receive reports/annual summary from Research Ethics going forward. CBL required Ethics to report into College RKE for accreditation purposes.</p>

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	<p>The Annual Assurance Report was APPROVED.</p> <p>Chair thanked all sub-committee chairs for their reports.</p>
RKEC.23.06.4.2	College Research Updates
RKEC.23.06.4.2.1	<p>The College Deans for Research & Enterprise presented brief highlights from their Annual Assurance reports. Attention was drawn to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CATE: CRKE had operated under 2 ToR and memberships (ACE and FET) and double sub-committees during the transition year. A reduced size was preferable for 2023/24 to facilitate strategic and business capabilities. Attention was drawn to the question of resourcing the growth in PhDs (i.e., physical space, integration into Research Centres, how to support growing body of people, etc.).- CBL: 1. Clarity was still needed around the path for escalating ethical matters and where research with human participants belonged; 2. Concerns raised over accommodation of additional PGRs (physically as well as capacity of doctoral academy); 3. How to record and transcribe data aligning with GPDR and Data protection had been escalated to RESC; 4. The RIS application process did not work well for CBL and the College would like more involvement in shaping future forms.- CHSS: 2 PGR students joined committee but links to the PGR community and incorporating research groups could be improved. Attention was again drawn to concern around effective progression management/lab space/supervisor capacity of increased PGRs. Work had commenced with Deans of T&L to support research informed teaching. <p>During discussion, RKEC raised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It was important to embed PGRs in the ecosystem and clarity was needed around reasonable expectations of the PGR offer.- The RIS scheme was discussed. It was important that the process for applying for research time was not onerous but remained transparent, fair and equitable and accountability was embedded. Following the harmonisation of eligibility and awards, the scheme should be evaluated to identify areas for improvement.- Members were sign-posted to the Internal Research Funding intranet page: https://intranet.uwe.ac.uk/tasks-guides/Collection/internal-research-funding. <p>ACTION: Director of Doctoral Academy to provide clarity around reasonable expectations of PGR offer in the context of PGR growth.</p>

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	<p>ACTION: Chair of UIEC/Secretary to cascade clarity around future Ethics structure to Colleges/Schools.</p> <p>ACTION: Secretary to coordinate end of year review of RIS.</p> <p>Chair thanked all Deans/representatives for their reports.</p>
RKEC.23.06.4.3	RKEC Annual Assurance Report 2022-23
RKEC.23.06.4.3.1	<p>RKEC considered the RKEC Annual Assurance report. Discussion highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future agendas to incorporate more strategic items to improve balance between business as usual and strategy matters. - More 'deep dives' should be incorporated to support the committee's ownership of its business strategy and KPIs. - A refreshed membership would decide how to best structure the meeting and collectively make best use of the time. <p>ACTION: Business plan to be developed to incorporate workshops and ways to engage in strategy.</p> <p>APPROVED to go through to Academic Board.</p>
RKEC.23.06.4.4	Doctoral Academy update
RKEC.23.06.4.4	<p>RKEC received a verbal update on the Doctoral Academy transition, including highlights from the DASC Annual Assurance report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2022/23 saw the highest ever number of applications and recruited PGRs but numbers were not enough to meet strategic target. There had been an increase in international applications. - Incorporating the PGR skills development workshops into the Invest Yourself programme had been successful. - Capacity building for Directors of Studies was encouraging – over 100 people had attended new supervisor training and supervisory groups were encouraged to include new members of staff. - Key changes made included: all doctoral candidates were expected to add their thesis to the repository in accessible form; maximum period of study for part time students was extended to 8 years; RD1 process would be a research governance check point rather than an assessment point. - A series of meetings and workshops had taken place or were scheduled with SPS, marketing, admissions, etc., to integrate and embed PGR processes and award progression into Schools, Colleges and TOM from September. With increased PGRs, it was important to embed them in business as usual rather than being 'othered'.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was proposed that Part A of Research Degrees Committees would sit at College level and Part B RDC to sit at School level.
RKEC.23.06.4.5	EDI in research group update
RKEC.23.06.4.5.1	<p>RKEC received a verbal update on the EDI in Research Working Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The working group had met twice, agreed ToR and 3 workstreams. Nominations for further members were in progress. - Workstream membership and action plans were being developed with clear outcomes anticipated by end of calendar year. - The group would ensure its activities aligned with REF and avoided duplication with other university initiatives.
RKEC.23.06.4.6	RKEC 2023/24 Terms of Reference
RKEC.23.06.4.6.1	<p>RKEC received proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference and Membership of 2023/24 RKEC. Amendments, including new membership, were made to reflect the new Colleges/Schools structure and changes in Ethics governance.</p> <p>RKEC discussion focused on proposed membership and the following points would be followed up by URKE Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should Research Admin and Contract Researchers have been removed? - Unclear who 'research active representatives' covered, if they were elected and if so how? - Should membership include Dean of L&T to solidify link between research and teaching or would School Directors of Research provide this link? - Proposal to have additional student reps for diversity of voice. <p>ACTION: Officer to propose amended membership before sending to Academic Board for approval.</p>
RKEC.23.06.5	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION
RKEC.23.06.5.3	*Library Services Report
RKEC.23.06.5.3.1	Two reports were starred, including a Research Data Sharing Overview, and not discussed.
RKEC.23.06.6	HEALTH AND SAFETY
RKEC.23.06.6.1	No issues were reported.

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RKEC.23.06.7	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
RKEC.23.06.7.1	No other business was raised.
	DATES OF MEETINGS 2023-24 Wednesday 27 September 2023 Thursday 30 November 2023 Wednesday 21 February 2024 Wednesday 1 May 2024 Wednesday 19 June 2024

Actions

RKEC.23.06.4.1.1	Officer/Secretary to work with Human Resources to ensure Research Governance was captured in Leavers processes.
RKEC.23.06.4.2.1.1	Director of Doctoral Academy to provide clarity around reasonable expectations of PGR offer in the context of PGR growth.
RKEC.23.06.4.2.1.2	Chair UIEC/Secretary to cascade clarity around future Ethics structure to Colleges/Schools.
RKEC.23.06.4.2.1.3	Secretary to coordinate end of year review of RIS.
RKEC.23.06.4.3.1	Business plan to be developed to incorporate workshops and ways to engage in strategy.
RKEC.23.06.4.6.1	Officer to propose amended membership before sending to Academic Board for approval.