Academic Board

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 (in Room 7X111)

Membership:

Present:	Prof A Coffey (Chair), Prof R Bolden, A Conway, Prof O Doran, T John (Secretary), Dr L Duong, Dr A Geary, Dr L Goodwin, Prof J Hancock, Prof A Ivlevs, Dr S Klein, Dr H Lewis-Smith, Prof R McDowell, Dr D Qualtrough, P Shelton, Prof M Smith, Prof A Varadi, Prof N Willey
Apologies:	Prof M Boddy, B Ekaette, Prof H Hickman, Dr M Kirjavainen-Morgan, Prof J Lamond, Dr H Moyes
In attendance:	N Button (Officer)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING	
RKEC23.02.1	**WELCOMES AND APOLOGIES**
RKEC23.02.1.1	The Chair welcomed members to the team, noting that Professor Martin Boddy would be leaving the University at the end of February, with Professor Amanda Coffey taking over the research brief and chairing meetings of RKEC. RKEC formally noted its thanks to Professor Boddy for his significant contribution to the University and wished him well.
RKEC23.02.2	**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**
RKEC.23.02.2.1	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 as a full and accurate record.
RKEC.23.02.2.2	The status of the actions arising from the previous meeting was noted:

	- There was an ongoing discussion about how best to measure all research and knowledge exchange activity in the data the University produced (ACTION CLOSED). - The review of the equality analysis relating to the PGR Admissions Policy was still to be carried out (ACTION REMAINED OPEN).
RKEC23.02.3	**STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**
RKEC.23.02.3.1	**Chair's Report, including external environment update**
RKEC.23.02.3.1.1	The Chair noted that all issues were covered elsewhere on the agenda and, as well as the formal business, RKEC would have the opportunity for a discussion about the future role and the function of the Committee.
RKEC23.02.3.2	**Research Readiness Review Final Report**
RKEC23.02.3.2.1	RKEC considered a final report from the Professor Martin Boddy, outgoing Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research & Enterprise on the outcomes of the Research Readiness Review. RKEC noted that this was the personal reflections of Professor Boddy and not a definitive list of actions that would necessarily be undertaken by the University. During discussion, RKEC raised the following: - Research governance support would need to be upgraded in line with expanded research ambitions. - PGR may be more heavily regulated if the Office for Students became the Designated Quality Body (DQB). - The TEF submission had highlighted a challenge in articulating how research activity enhanced student experience, with a greater need to understand and improve the links between research and learning and teaching. - The balance of time that academics could commit to research activities should be kept under regular review. - UKRI had supported the creation of the new Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology and was committed to working with them. At the same time, the University and sector representative groups were enhancing their engagement with the Shadow Cabinet ahead of the next general election.
RKEC23.02.3.2.2	RKEC noted the report and its considerations, which would contribute to a refresh of the University's research strategy and actions to achieve our research ambitions.
RKEC.23.02.3.3	**External Bidding Data**
RKEC.23.02.3.3.1	RKEC considered the latest external bidding data, noting that external research income was one of the ten metrics on the corporate

	scorecard. Whilst the overall ambition of expanding research funding was important, there was a whole dashboard of data that explained the richness and nuances of that data. During discussion, RKEC raised the following points: - The research dashboard went to Colleges but did not come to RKEC as a standing item. - It was important to move from data to insight and more consideration was needed on how to make that process as simple as possible. - The tables in data set 3.7 only currently listed project leads and should be amended to reflect the wider teamwork. - Data were not always reported in a clear and consistent way, with funding being misallocated or omitted. The distinction between research and knowledge exchange was often blurred. - There was a challenge of retaining successful research staff while recognising career aspirations and desire to move on.
RKEC.23.02.3.3.2	RKEC noted the recent successes in income generation and the need to scrutinise the increased number of bids to understand the size and success of different types of bids.
RKEC23.02.4	**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**
RKEC.23.02.4.1	**College Research Challenges Update**
RKEC.23.02.4.1.1	RKEC considered an update from the College Deans for Research & Enterprise on the key issues and challenges. Attention was drawn to the following: - **CATE:** challenges included research and retention, protecting research time, encouraging new research active staff to join, relating work to REF outputs, ensuring technical staff engaged with research and not just supported, and the replacement of EU funding. - **CBL:** challenges included recruitment of staff with strong research potential, recruiting to fill gaps rather than viewing individuals holistically, identity creation within the College, balance between teaching and research, change fatigue and morale among staff, and communicating the allocation of research to staff. - **CHSS:** challenges included uncertainty around funding for research, growing numbers of external partnerships, early-career researchers and staff recruitment, retention, and promotion, support being insufficient for growing PGR community, and the ongoing restructure of School-level research structures and their relationship with Research Centres.
RKEC.23.02.4.1.2	During discussion, RKEC raised the following: - International travel procedures had been raised by a number of individuals and groups and a reasonable solution was being worked on.

	- It was important to ensure that structures did not inhibit engagement activities. The restructure was designed to provide an opportunity to reimagine collaboration as well as improve practice, not to artificially put up barriers between researchers. - The University needed to consider how to balance the diversity of staff that it required and how it allowed researchers the time they need to conduct their research alongside other responsibilities.
RKEC.23.02.5	**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**
RKEC.23.02.5.1	***Sub-Committee Updates:** - **Animal Welfare & Ethics Sub-Committee** - **Human Tissue Sub-Committee** - **Research Ethics Sub-Committee**
RKEC.22.02.5.1.1	The reports were starred and not discussed.
RKEC.22.02.5.2	***College Research Updates:** - **CATE** - **CBL** - **CHSS**
RKEC.23.02.5.2.1	The reports were starred and not discussed.
RKEC.23.02.5.3	***Library Services Report**
RKEC.23.02.5.3.1	The report was starred, and the committee noted the work that was about to commence on redesigning Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the Library. There was a need for a wider discussion on what the useful space for PGR and MRes students might look like. PGR spaces were not as heavily used as they were before the pandemic and there was wider work to be done on how space was used.
RKEC23.02.6	**THEMATIC DISCUSSION**
RKEC.23.02.6.1	**RKEC Self-Reflection and Future Structure**
RKEC.23.02.6.1.1	As a result of the transition from the outgoing Pro Vice Chancellor for Research & Enterprise and the outcomes of the Research Readiness Review, RKEC openly discussed its effectiveness and how its future structure could best support the ambitions of the research strand of Strategy 2030.
RKEC.23.02.7	**HEALTH AND SAFETY**
RKEC.23.02.7.1	No issues were reported.
RKEC.23.02.8	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

RKEC.23.02.8.1	No other business.
	DATES OF MEETINGS 2022-23 Wednesday 26 April Wednesday 21 June