

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE**

**CONFIRMED**

**Wednesday 5 April 2017**

**14.00 – 16.30**

**The Dartington Suite, Frenchay**

**Present:** Professor Martin Boddy (Chair), Amanda Conway, Hazel Edwards, Tracey John, Jane Newton, Professor Nicholas O'Regan, Mandy Rose, Professor Neil Willey.

**Apologies:** Professor Jenny Ames, Richard Bond, Tracy Chalk, Professor Myra Conway, Rachel Cowie, Dr Lauren Devine, Professor Olena Doran, Professor Tony Ghaye, Keith Hicks, Professor Glenn Lyons, Paul Manners, Professor Phil Rumney, Professor Mel Smith, Dr Heidi Williamson.

**In attendance:** Dr Alistair Clark (representing Prof Glenn Lyons), Alison Vaughton (Officer)

**WELCOMES AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RKEC17.04.01 Apologies were received from Professor Jenny Ames, Richard Bond, Tracy Chalk, Professor Myra Conway, Rachel Cowie, Dr Lauren Devine, Professor Olena Doran, Professor Tony Ghaye, Keith Hicks, Professor Glenn Lyons, Paul Manners, Professor Phil Rumney, Professor Mel Smith and Dr Heidi Williamson.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS ON 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017 AND MATTERS ARISING**

RKEC17.04.02 Ms Conway requested an amendment to the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at RKEC17.02.31 to clarify Library Services activity on open access and wider engagement. This was agreed and the minutes, with this amendment, were agreed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

RKEC17.04.03 RKEC17.02.13: The Officer had looked into the possibility of holding this meeting in Future Space but no meeting rooms had been large enough to hold the full committee.

RKEC17.04.04 All other actions had been addressed or were on the agenda for discussion at this meeting.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

RKEC17.04.05 REF: The Chair reported that a review of all UOAs had been completed. He thanked the UOA Leaders for their excellent work to date in pulling together information about their units. Professor Boddy undertook to bring a summary of

the current overall position on REF to the next meeting of the Committee. Overall he felt that the picture was looking quite good, although there remained the great unknown of how the REF may change once the results of the consultation have been taken into account. He reported that there were some concerns, but that these were not unexpected and were being looked into to determine how best to address them.

RKEC17.04.06 UWE's REF Consultation response had been submitted on 17<sup>th</sup> March and had taken a robust line, highlighting our main areas of concern – using HESA data to determine research-active status, including all 'research-active' staff, the numbers of outputs to be submitted in each UOA, and non-portability of outputs. Initial thought was being given to options for dealing with possible outcomes of the consultation. UWE would need to 'play the game' as well as our sector comparators. Professor Boddy felt that it was getting late in the day for major changes to the exercise, and noted that the invitation to apply to be Main Panel Chairs had been published. He reported that the Alliance had responded along similar lines to UWE, and noted that the mission groups had – unusually – discussed their lines of response with each other about this.

RKEC17.04.07 LEP: The Chair reported that a further round of EU funding (EU CIF money) had been announced with a closing date in May.

RKEC17.04.08 Professor Boddy advised the Committee that BEIS was undertaking a consultation on industrial strategy (details at <https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/> - closing date 17 April).

RKEC17.04.09 Future Space: all was going well with 45% of capacity now committed including some international businesses (Japanese, Canadian, US). Linkages with UWE academics were growing strongly.

RKEC17.04.10 Professor Boddy announced that Dr Lauren Devine had been appointed Chair of UREC. He was very pleased to welcome her to this role.

#### **RESEARCH CENTRES AND INSTITUTES**

RKEC17.04.11 The Committee noted the appointment of Dr Clare Wilkinson and Dr Emma Weitkamp as Co-Directors of the Science Communication Unit.

RKEC17.04.12 The Committee received Professor Ames' report on the health of the HAS Research Centres and Groups (RKEC17.04.01). They noted the reduction in research income and Professor Boddy stated that discussions had taken place with the faculty about this. A useful round of 'PDRs' involving Professor Neill, Professor Ames and key members of each Research Centre/Group had been conducted and given them a good indication of the activity. Of particular importance were staff progression and the need to appoint new staff with a strong research background.

#### **GRADUATE SCHOOL**

RKEC17.04.13 Professor Willey reported on discussions in the Graduate School Committee and at a specially convened RSIG PGR Awayday and presented a paper on developing a strategy for PGR at UWE (RKEC17.04.02). An overall aspiration for the Graduate School was to increase PGR numbers to around 700, but without increasing UWE's total investment in PGR. It was hoped that this could be achieved through evolution rather than revolution.

- RKEC17.04.14 Professor Willey set out his three key proposals in the paper:
1. Develop a more flexible, accessible and attractive doctoral offer by capitalising on UWE's experience of delivering a diversity of doctorates: to include new Professional Doctorate awards and PhDs by publication, thereby increasing recruitment from professional, international, internal markets.
  2. Improved collaboration with partners to develop new funding streams, including trialling a PGR Partnership Fund.
- Professor Willey hoped that both these initiatives would increase numbers while keeping investment stable.
3. Enhancing research culture – moving towards thinking of developing the PGR culture from the bottom up (with enhanced interaction between PGRs and their Faculties, Research Centres and Departments) rather than top down.

RKEC17.04.15 Professor Willey recommended this as a sensible and achievable approach, and noted that a lot of discussion and deliberation lay behind this short document. He wanted to confirm that the Committee was happy with this approach. Members agreed that this presented a good way forward and in particular liked the proposal of a PhD by publication, hoping that this could be extended to become PhD by 'output', which would be attractive for partnership funders and provide opportunities for international participants.

RKEC17.04.16 The Committee endorsed all sections of the proposal. They noted that its implementation should also contribute to research metrics: the number of staff with doctorates should improve through the opportunities presented by PhDs by publication/output.

#### **LIBRARY SERVICES UPDATE**

RKEC17.04.17 Mrs Conway presented paper RKEC17.04.03. Library Services were proposing to focus on an enhanced move towards digital provision of information, with quite a radical proposition to go as digital as possible over the next 5 years. They would be taking details to Faculty RKEs, departments and centre meetings. Pockets of outputs/books would be retained in some places eg in ACE.

RKEC17.04.18 Mrs Conway explained that the rationale for this move was the low number of students borrowing books. Library Services were assessing how best to add value and had determined that this would best be achieved by moving to predominantly a digital offer, recognising that this is the way that students and staff want to access information. This also enhances library space usage. Ms Rose stated that staff in ACE were passionately against this approach, and still wanted tangible access to books. She would welcome a more detailed breakdown of the information presented in the pie chart. Mrs Conway stated that separate discussions would be taking place in faculties. Some consideration might also be given to the possibility of establishing agreements with other HEIs' libraries for access.

RKEC17.04.19 Some members expressed concerns over accessibility to information, noting that even when digital versions are available, some people have difficulties reading them and cannot use digital materials. It would be good to look carefully at the technological options available eg being able to download a copy of a document

that you can annotate and retain. Mrs Conway stressed that UWE's libraries were keen to work with colleagues on this.

#### **SECURITY SENSITIVE RESEARCH**

RKEC17.04.20 Professor Boddy explained that paper (RKEC17.04.04) related to the University's requirements in relation to the Government's Prevent strategy. The principal concern was the possibility of radicalisation of students and staff, but in the context of research this encompasses research using security sensitive data and materials. This paper was a proposal for handling research which may be deemed to be security sensitive. In short, if an individual believes that the work they are undertaking has security sensitivities then it should be flagged up and reviewed by UREC using the procedures for ethical scrutiny already in place. Details of such research would be recorded on a register held by the research ethics administration team in RBI. Where supervisors identify security sensitive issues in students proposals the supervisors should make a decision about whether the work should go ahead and, where this is the case, refer the proposal to UREC for full ethics review. The Committee noted that Jayne Storey, Prevent Lead for UWE, had concerns that the present guidance did not give sufficiently clear information about approval mechanisms and arrangements for supporting and safeguarding students. However, the Committee accepted the view of UREC that the guidance should be succinct and refer or link to other relevant policies and procedures in the University, including those for research ethics approvals, and to contact points for advice. The Committee agreed that researchers for whom this is relevant, ie those conducting security sensitive research, should be required to complete the UWE Prevent training module. Further consideration would need to be given to raising awareness of these arrangements.

RKEC17.04.21 The guidance would be revised to incorporate the training requirement and submitted to Academic Board, thereafter to the Board of Governors, and submitted to HEFCE as requested.

**Action:** RB

#### **RBI FORWARD PLAN AND REVIEW**

RKEC17.04.22 The Chair presented RBI's Strategic Plan for 2017-8 to 2021-2 (Paper RKEC17.04.05) to give the Committee an opportunity to review RBI's activity over the past year and proposals for the coming period. He noted in particular work around research administration support and the forthcoming PIMS project. He invited thoughts and comments about the plan, and noted the ongoing intention to improve signposting and clarity around the roles of individuals in RBI.

RKEC17.04.23 Professor Willey requested more detail around RBI's activity with regard to PGR support and provision. Professor Boddy agreed, particularly in terms of visibility, and stated that this would be reflected going forwards.

**Action:** MB

#### **FACULTY RESEARCH UPDATES FROM ASSOCIATE DEANS (RKE)**

RKEC17.04.24 FBL. Professor O'Regan presented his research update to the FBL Executive (RKEC17.04.07). He noted an increase in publications in 4\* rated journals compared with the last REF, impact events, and considerable external engagement activity. He was pleased to report excellent UWE research income for Business and Management compared with other Alliance universities and with

Russell Group universities. He noted that much of the income generated was from a small number of staff and the consequent potential for higher income through an increased number of staff bidding equally successfully.

- RKEC17.04.25 Professor Boddy commended the model of presenting a report to the Faculty Executive, and thereafter to this committee, thereby bringing research to the Faculty Executive's attention.
- RKEC17.04.26 ACE. Ms Edwards reported that she had added research activity to her Faculty's Executive agenda. From her report (RKEC17.04.06) she noted that bidding had initially increased, and while this had slowed down it remained higher than in previous periods. Other notable research activity included the publication of two books and launch of Andrew Spicer and Steve Presence's report 'Go West! Bristol's Film and Television Industries'.
- RKEC17.04.27 Considerable work was ongoing on impact for the REF, with the assistance of Dr Amanda Bond (RBI). REF preparation going forward would include reviewing outputs, both by internal and external reviewers, and agreed actions for each unit of assessment.
- RKEC17.04.28 She noted other key activity, including the VR Lab, which was to be launched in Autumn; an extended PGR research fund enabling travel further afield, though uptake had not been as high as anticipated; UWE joining SW and Wales DTP confirmed with a statement of intent to AHRC in April and bid submission in October.
- RKEC17.04.29 Ms Edwards asked Committee members to save the date – 30th June, at MShed – for a celebration of ACE research and hopefully lots of engagement and collaboration with ACE and other UWE staff and interested external parties. Details would follow.
- RKEC17.04.30 FET. Dr Clark presented Professor Lyons' report (RKEC17.04.08). He reported on research bidding successes, in particular from Professor Janice Kiely and Professor Tony Pipe; REF UOA leaders had submitted reports to RSIG, and were now going back to research leaders to discuss the quality of outputs. This exercise needed careful management. For FET research time allowances going forward the quality of outputs would be part of the determinant. A research showcase event was being held on 16th May.
- RKEC17.04.31 HAS. The Committee noted JA's report (RKEC17.04.09).
- RKEC17.04.32 AV was asked to circulate dates of research showcases to members
- Action: AV**
- RKEC17.04.33 Professor Boddy announced that Dr Paul Spencer would shortly be leaving UWE and moving to the University of Bristol. Whilst very pleased for Paul, Professor Boddy noted that he would be a loss to UWE. A replacement was being recruited who would develop a programme of training for PGR and UWE academics, taking on board the recommendations of the Researcher Development Training Group (chaired by Professor Lyons) and bringing in external trainers where necessary. Professor Willey hoped that Dr Spencer's move to UoB would provide an opportunity for UWE and UoB to work collaboratively for PGRs in Bristol.

#### **CROSS-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH**

- RKEC17.04.34 Professor Boddy stated that there was a current drive for greater cross-disciplinarity in research across the board and that this was driven by several things, including the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF), part of a significant

tranche of money for distribution by Innovate UK and the Research Councils. He tabled paper RKEC17.04.10 Cross-disciplinary and Grand Challenge (GC) Research which set out the background to current activity, including the RCUK GCRF focus on developing countries, across all disciplines, and early thoughts on how UWE might respond. Professor Boddy posed questions as to how UWE might align with and access GC funding, and whether a VC's Challenge Fund might be established to stimulate early stage cross-disciplinary, challenge-based thinking and capability.

**Action:** AV to circulate paper

RKEC17.04.35 It was noted that there are many examples of UWE's involvement with major initiatives such as this so the University would not be 'starting from cold'. It was suggested that activity might be co-ordinated centrally, possibly with a champion of Grand Challenge in each faculty. There was general agreement that UWE should respond to this opportunity. One suggestion was an event convened around some of the key themes to bring together people from different disciplines. Another proposed nominating someone from RBI to have responsibility for big funding opportunities and channel to appropriate UWE staff. Ms John proposed that the upcoming showcase events might be an opportunity for bringing together staff from different disciplines by encouraging other faculties' staff to attend. She would take this forward in RBI. Professor Boddy stated that he would consider the possibility of establishing a central fund to support collaborative work. It was proposed that one or two pilots should be carried out, and further consideration dependent upon the outcome of these.

**Action:** MB, TJ

#### **UWE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE STRATEGY**

RKEC17.04.36 The UWE, Bristol draft KE strategy document was now available on the URKEC SharePoint site. UWE's bid to HEFCE for HEIF had been successful as bid, and funding was consequently secured for the time being. The Chair noted that the present document was intended as a first step, and more thought would need to be given to how this agenda would be advanced alongside research. He proposed bringing this back to the next meeting, in conjunction with thinking on enterprise.

**Action:** MB

#### **REF2021 CONSULTATION**

RKEC17.04.37 The Committee noted paper RKEC17.04.11, UWE's response to the HEFCE consultation on REF2021.

#### **URKEC ANNUAL REPORT**

RKEC17.04.38 The Committee noted paper RKEC17.04.12, the Committee's complete annual report to Academic Board for 2015-16.

#### **EXTERNAL BIDDING DETAILS**

RKEC17.04.39 The Committee received paper RKEC17.04.13 research bidding details for the year to date.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

RKEC17.04.40 No health and safety issues were raised.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

RKEC17.04.41 Professor O'Regan informed members that Dame Helen Ghosh, Director General of the National Trust, would be giving a distinguished speaker address at UWE later that day.

RKEC17.04.42 Jane Newton reported that a project manager for PIMS had been appointed and would start at UWE on 8 May 2017.

## MEETING DATES FOR 2016-17

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 14:00-16:30

Meeting dates for 2017-18
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2017, 14:00-16:30
Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2017, 14:00-16:30
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> April 2017, 14:00-16:30
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2017, 14:00-16:30

## Actions:

RKEC17.04.21	Security sensitive research – Guidance to be revised to incorporate the training requirement and submitted to Academic Board	RB
RKEC17.04.23	RBI forward plan – MB to add further detail on PGR support and provision	MB
RKEC17.04.32	Faculty research showcases - AV to circulate dates of research showcases to members	AV
RKEC17.04.35	Cross-disciplinary and Grand Challenge Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TJ to look into using research showcase events to encourage cross-disciplinary working</li><li>• MB to consider establishment of central fund to support collaborative work</li></ul>	MB, TJ
RKEC17.04.36	Knowledge Exchange strategy – bring back to June meeting of URKEC together with further thinking on enterprise.	MB