

University Board for Research and Innovation

24/17 A meeting of the University Board for Research and Innovation was held on Tuesday 9 April 2024 at 9.00am in Whiteknights House, Committee Room 2.

Present

Parveen Yaqoob, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) [Chair]
Dominik Zaum, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resource)
John Gibbs, Research Dean (Heritage & Creativity)
Mona Ashok, Business Informatics System and Accounting, ECR representative
Karen Henderson, Director of Research and Innovation
Claudia Murray, Co-Chair of Research Staff Committee
Chris Jones, Department of Biomedical Sciences, Senate member
Daniella La Penna, Department of Languages and Culture, Senate member
Sue Egleton, University Librarian
Nathan Helsby, Planning and Strategy Office [Secretary]

Apologies

Rowan Sutton, Research Dean (Environment)
Carol Wagstaff, Research Dean (Agriculture, Food and Health)
Adrian Williams, Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies and Researcher Development
Adrian Bell, Research Dean (Prosperity & Resilience)
Anne-Marie West, Finance Business Partner

24/18 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2024 [item 2]

The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 January 2024.

24/19 Actions from previous meetings [item 3]

The Board noted that actions from previous meeting had been completed or were addressed in this meeting agenda.

24/20 Matters arising from the minutes (not covered elsewhere on the agenda) [item 4]

There were no matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

24/21 Update from the Chair [item 5]

The Board received verbal updates from the Chair on the following:

- **A meeting of the JISC research strategy group attended by PVCs for Research and Innovation** (or equivalent roles, [Research and innovation - Jisc](#)). In particular, the Board noted:
 - The Concordat to support research Integrity was to be revised to incorporate AI considerations.
 - Institutions would be asked to complete a survey on the condition of research infrastructure for UKRI.

- **Government response to the Independent Review of Research bureaucracy** ([Review of research bureaucracy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-review-of-research-bureaucracy)). Notably, the government had instructed institutions not to 'gold-plate' their EDI activity.
- **UKRI Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Panel.** UKRI had invited members of the EDI Panel to reconvene following its suspension earlier this year.
- **The University's ECR conference** would be taking place on 18 April 2024.

24/22 Research awards and applications FQ2 2023/24 [item 5d]

The Board reviewed the University's position on Research awards and applications at FQ2 2023/24.

- Award value was £12.6m (behind previous years) with the University 25% towards its five-year target (against 30% milestone).
- Application value was higher than most previous years (£77m) at this stage in the cycle.

In discussion, it noted.

- The recent Research Division Lead/IDRC meeting included a discussion about what were contributing characteristics to high performing units, of which levels of research income was a factor. Research Deans would be feeding back further from disciplinary discussions.
- The Planning and Strategy Office made available research data to help support research leaders in understanding their position, including breakdowns by career stage. A future RDL/IDRC session was planned to address the use of data to support research planning and monitoring.
- Additional data and context was helpful in understanding research performance. The data packs used for Schools in the Strategic Alignment Process (which included teaching, finance, staff, resource data) would be prepared for all schools.

24/23 Current Research Information System update [item 6a]

The Board received an update on progress with the implementation of Current Research Information System at the University. It noted the following:

- The tender would be published in the next couple of weeks.
- The process would include demonstrations by potential providers to a representative group of academics.

24/24 Research Excellence Framework 2029 [item 6b]

The Board received an update on the Research Excellence Framework. It noted the following:

- The funding bodies had opened up the consultation on the Open Access policy for REF 2029.
- The funding bodies were running pilots in selected Units of Assessment on the People, Culture and Environment (PCE) section of the submission. The University would be submitting an expression of interest for a single UOA.
- The University would be engaging with the Funding bodies' PCE indicator workshops through May to July 2024
- The University had appointed UOA Leads for most UOAs.

24/25 Research excellence awards: Research output prize for Early Career Researchers [item 6c]

The Board received details of the Theme winners of the research output prize for Early Career Researchers and the process whereby winners were determined.

24/26 Committee on Researcher Development and PGR Studies [item 7a]

The Board received minutes from the Committee's most recent meeting and noted the following:

- The Committee had observed gaps for submission rates and viva outcomes. The Board was interested in what actions were being taken to try to address these gaps at both institution and sector level. The Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies and Researcher Development was preparing a PGR strategy for a June UCRI meeting, which could cover this question.

Action: Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies and Researcher Development to outline what actions were being taken on PGR completion/attainment gaps, potentially as part of the PGR strategy document

The Board agreed to:

- Commend to Senate the proposal to change the confirmation of registration date to 12 months for FT students and 18 months for PT students.

24/27 Open Research Action Plan [items 8a]

The Board was joined by Etienne Roesch for this item. The Board received the plan along with comments from CORRI and UCRI, which had previously reviewed the plan. It noted that:

- The first open research action plan had covered 2021 to 2023. This action plan covered 2024 to 2029.
- The overall vision was to embed open research culture and practices across the University and its partners.

The Board provided the following feedback:

- For the quantifiable measures of progress, where possible, baselines and targets were needed (or needed to be developed), along with associated actions to achieve.
- The Plan should articulate where appropriate with the University's research culture programme of work as and when it develops.
- The Board reinforced UCRI's comments around the need to ensure realistic timing and pacing of some of the activity over the longer timeframe.
- As well as budget for communication materials, staff resource would also be required to support communication and awareness raising.

The plan would be updated, taking into account comments and feedback from boards/committees, and shared through the Board's Teams page.

Action: Adrian Bell/Etienne Roesch to update the plan to take into account comments/feedback and provide to Board Secretary for sharing

24/28 Review of the Research Development Fund [items 8a]

The Board received a review of the Research Development Fund (RDF, formerly known as RETF) prepared by the PVC (R&I). It was invited to discuss the aims and approach to allocation in advance

of the paper being provided to University Executive Board. The Board made the following comments:

- Whilst use of the fund to support income generation was acknowledged, non-financial returns on investment should also be highlighted, for example the role of RDF to support research culture/environment and partnerships.
- There was strong support for the Fellowships and Open Call to retain and support the pipeline, including research leave, and funding for disciplines without other forms of infrastructure funding and research teams.
- The paper highlighted the additional ringfenced funding available from Research England but acknowledged the potential for these allocations and the University's Mainstream QR allocation (allocated internally to Schools) to be reduced.
- Members highlighted the University's additional research investment focused in specific areas, for example AFESP (Advancing the Frontiers of Earth System Prediction), and Agriculture (through NIRD).

Action: PVC (R&I) to refine paper for UEB, taking into account Board comments

24/29 Reporting committees [items 9a-c]

The Board received minutes and/or summaries from the recent meetings of the following Committees.

- University Committee for Research and Innovation
- Committee on Open Research and Researcher Integrity

24/30 Date of next meeting

10 June 2024, 11am.