UNIVERSITY BOARD FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

22/17 A meeting of the University Board for Research and Innovation was held on Wednesday 15 June 2022 at 11am on Microsoft Teams.

Present

Dominik Zaum, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (Chair)
Parveen Yaqoob, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Carol Wagstaff, Research Dean (Agriculture, Food and Health)
John Gibbs, Research Dean (Heritage & Creativity)
Daniella La Penna, Department of Languages and Culture, Senate member
Mona Ashok, Business Informatics System and Accounting, ECR representative
Stuart Hunt, University Librarian
Richard Frazier, Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences, Senate member
Bethany Nugus, Education Officer (RUSU)
Nathan Helsby, Planning and Strategy Office [Secretary]

Apologies

Darren Browne, Commercial Director
Mark Fellowes, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic Planning & Resource)
Adrian Bell, Research Dean (Prosperity & Resilience)
Phil Newton, Research Dean (Environment)
Adrian Williams, Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies and Researcher Development
Ainur Bulasheva, Postgraduate Research Student Officer RUSU, Students Union representative

22/18 **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2022 [item 2]**

The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2022.

22/19 **Actions from previous meetings [item 3]**

21/38. International research partnerships. The Board noted that Paul Inman had been unable to attend this meeting to discuss international research partnerships as planned; he would be invited to attend the autumn meeting in the next session.

22/11 Acceptance of research-related funding. Final policy to be approved at item 8a.

22/20 **Matters arising from the minutes (not covered elsewhere on the agenda) [item 4]**

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

22/21 **Review of Terms of Reference [item 5]**

The Board received its Terms of Reference in advance of the next academic year. Members would reflect on the business covered during the year, and provide comments to the Chairs, particularly to highlight any gaps or suggest areas requiring greater scrutiny

22/22   Diversity and Inclusion data in research [item 6a]

The Board received a report covering some research-related diversity and inclusion data across the following areas: staff demographics; representation amongst Research Division Leaders and committee membership; research awards and applications; research students; and research output volume. In particular, it noted the following:

- Generally, Females' average research award and application values were lower than Males, and the proportion of award/application value was lower than the proportion of Females in Research Divisions

- Generally, the proportion of research awards and applications from BAME staff was lower than the proportion of BAME staff in Research Divisions.

- There were differences in research student outcomes between characteristics, notably between BAME/White students, which were being looked into by the Graduate School.

- The proportion of outputs from Female staff was lower than the proportion of Females in the Research Divisions. There was some evidence of decline in output volume from Females in the most recent complete year.

- The report was complementary to other D&I related reporting, such as the University's annual Diversity & Inclusion report and the REF 2021 Equality Impact Assessment.

In discussion, the following was highlighted by members

- With regard to female/male differences, members queried whether other factors could be explored, for example impact of maternity leave, child caring responsibilities, for example on the time taken to become Professor.

- It would be important to understand whether there were differential impacts on workload in regard to personal characteristics, in particular females. This would be explored in part of the Workload work in the Individual Expectations workstream. Similarly, it was felt that COVID had had a greater impact on female productivity, although it was too early to draw firm conclusions.

- The White/BAME difference in research applications was confirmed by sector data, for example UKRI.

- The Board noted that differences in BAME progression through personal titles had been identified.

- It was suggested that some of the findings could be linked in with actions or issues identified in the Race Equality Charter Mark and the Athena Swan.

- Where appropriate, it was suggested that statistical tests of significance were carried out to confirm practical differences.

- Output data were based on data in SciVal. The Board recognised that this represented a subset of research output activity, particularly in those disciplines where longform publication was more prevalent. CentAUR data would be used for future iterations.

- There was ongoing work with regard to Research Culture, to which these findings could usefully contribute, for example with regard to levels of ambition in terms of awards and applications amongst female and BAME staff.

The following actions were agreed

- The Secretary to refine the report and share findings with relevant individuals/groups, for example Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Personal Titles group, Race Equality action team, and relevant D&I Staff networks

- Planning and Strategy Office to discuss with Library the extraction of the full CentAUR dataset.

22/23   REF 2021 results [item 6b]

The Board received a summary of the University's REF 2021 results, which was also being provided to Senate and Council.

It noted that the University submitted 700 FTE staff across 22 UOA with c. 1700 outputs and 72 Impact case studies. By Grade Point Average, the University ranked 47th (48th in REF 2014) by GPA and 35th by Research Power (27th in REF 2014). At Unit level, all but three Units improved GPA compared with REF 2014 and half the units maintained or improved their overall rank.

- The University's overall GPA ranking was in line with REF 2014, but the ranking by Research Power (GPA x FTE) had dropped on account of the increase in the University's REF FTE submission being below the increase across the sector and comparator institutions. The latter was likely to have an impact on the University's share of QR funding.

- At institution level, the University's result for the Environment element showed relative improvement over the sector. More detailed data on REF income and research student metrics would be available shortly.

- The University's Impact ranking was broadly in line with the REF 2021 performance.

- There had been an increase in the University's proportion of 3* and 4* outputs, broadly in line with sector increase, in fair part the result of changes to the number and selectivity of outputs.

- At subject level, there was some excellent and some disappointing outcomes for the University. Changes to submission strategy from the last REF had been broadly successful, for example in relation to Biomedical Sciences and Biomedical Engineering and Global Development.

- Next steps included an internal reflection exercise at institutional and subject level; determination of the future approach to review of output quality; and further refinements to the impact strategy in light of review of REF outcomes.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- The internal review should consider the University's future submission strategy, for example the potential aggregation of Units on account of critical mass, competitiveness or coherence.

- There was an ongoing sector-level consultation on the design of the next REF: the Future Research Assessment Programme.

- In some areas, the quality of research outputs had been overestimated; the University was currently reviewing the approach to output quality review, taking into account the difference between formative and summative assesesment.

22/24   THE Global Impact Rankings 2022 [item 6ci]

The Board received a summary of the University outcomes in the THE Global Impact Rankings for 2022. The University was ranked in the 101-200 in the overall ranking band with top 30 rankings in

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 8, 12, and in the top quartile for research scores (27%) in all but one SDG. The Board in particular welcomed the positive research scores.

In discussion, the emerging contribution of Libraries to SDGs was highlighted, notably in relation to open research and access for developing countries. It was suggested to link up with the Head of Research Communications, since this could enhance the University's submission in SDG 17.

22/25   QS World University Rankings 2023 [item 6cii]

The Board received a summary of the University's outcomes in this year's QS World University Rankings. The University's world ranking had dropped from 202 to 229; the University was now ranked just outside the top 16% of ranked institutions. Amongst the 90 UK institutions, the University was ranked 28th (from 27th in 2021). The international related criteria remained the University's highest ranked areas with Student Staff ratio ranked the lowest (at 601st). Of rankings at subject level, the University was ranked highest for Agriculture and Forestry, Earth and Marine Sciences and Environmental Sciences.

22/26   Q2021/22 FQ3 research awards and applications [item 6ciii]

The Board received a summary of the University's YTD performance on research applications and awards. The University had received £27.4m in awards in the year to date, which was in line or above the equivalent position in previous years at this stage in the cycle. At £89m in value, applications were somewhat down on previous years. Compared with the 2021/22 University target, the University was at 65% three quarters through the year. In discussion, the Board highlighted the following:

- There was evidence of a drop in industry funding. The Board noted that there were plans to bring the Knowledge Transfer Centre back into Research Services, which should help align and push on activity in this area, with co-location in Schools where there was greater opportunities.

- EU funding remained strong, but there were concerns about sustainability with these projects, notwithstanding the Government's Plan B stabilization funding. There was some evidence to suggest projects changing leadership from UK institutions.

- Future Research Division income targets would be set based on REF 2021 income data.

22/27   UKRI competitive funding decision 2016/17 to 2020/21 [item 6civ]

The Board received a summary of the University's performance in UKRI competitive funding decisions. The University had received 17 awards from 83 applications (as Lead organization) in the recently published data (2020/21). The overall award value £12.8m was in line with recent years, but there was a lower success rate than previous years (c. 20%), which was below the sector average. As co-applicant, the University was part of successful awards to the value of £18m, notably from NERC.

22/28   Research output prize for Early Career Researchers [item 7b]

The Board noted the Theme winners of the Research output prize for Early Career Researchers: Neha Hui in Prosperity and Resilience; Anika Salim in Agriculture, Food and Health; Georgios Margazoglou in Environment; and Nicola Abram in Heritage and Creativity. The awards were presented, along with the research engagement and impact awards, at the University's Research Excellence 2022 event on 13 June 2022.

22/29   Acceptance of research and innovation funding policy [item 8a]

The Board received for information a copy of the policy, which had been reviewed at the Board's previous meeting, and had now been agreed by UEB. It noted that there might have to be some adjustment to reflect recent developments with regard to the free speech bill and expectations on reporting on funding from overseas institutions. Members remained concerned about the potential for acceptance of funding agreements to result in censorship or constraints.

22/30   Acknowledgement Guidelines for Technical Staff in Publications [item 8b]

The Board welcomed and approved the proposed policy to cover the approach to the recognition, through appropriate acknowledgement, of the contribution of Technical staff in support of research publications. It acknowledged a potential grey area in establishing the point at which attribution of co-authorship was appropriate, that is significant data analysis and intellectual input. There might also be some disciplinary differences in approach, working within these principles.

The Board recognised that this was a starting point for consideration of contributions from other support and professional services staff, for example in the Library and Special Collections.

22/31   Knowledge Exchange Framework: Decisions for the second iteration UKRI open access policy [item 8c]

The Board received information about the second iteration of the Knowledge Exchange Framework, planned for September 2022. It noted the following

- Benchmark cluster groups would remain the same for KEF 2 but may be revisited for KEF 3 with reference to REF 2021 data.

- The seven perspectives would remain the same with some minor changes to underpinning metrics.

- Institutions' narrative submissions and self-assessment would be carried forward from KEF 1

The Board note that the University had considered whether the KEF outcomes could serve as a University KPI, but this was being revisited in light of review of the first iteration of KEF.

22/32   Reporting committees [item 9a-c]

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

- **Committee on Researcher Development and PGR Studies**

- **Committee on Open Research and Researcher Integrity**. The Committee had discussed the Open Research Action Plan; the embedding of open research into promotion, probation and professorial review; the different layers of research integrity training being proposed; and the actions around appropriate governance of research ethics at the University.

- **University Committee for Research and Innovation**. The Board noted in particular that the Committee had discussed and agreed an impact strategy, which set out the approach the University will take towards impact over the next 6 years. The Committee on Research Impact and Public Engagement had also played an important role in the development of the Strategy, which had been circulated to relevant colleagues. Strengthening the culture of impact was a key part, which required commitment from researchers and communication of activity. The Board would discuss further at its autumn term meeting, noting that the strategy will be responsive to further review of REF outcomes.

22/33   Research Travel Grants [item 9d]

The Board received the annual report from the Research Travel Grant Sub-Committee, which oversees the allocation of awards to support conference attendance and other research-related travel. In 2021/22 YTD, the scheme had supported 55 applications to a total of £21k against a budget of £55k. The Board noted the question about the use of the fund by research students studying at a distance, and that the fund should not in principle support travel to attend University activity in the UK. It asked that the Sub-Committee develop a proposal with reference to existing rules.

Action: Research Travel Grant Sub-Committee to develop a proposal for the use of the fund by research students studying at a distance

22/34   Acknowledgement Guidelines for Technical Staff in Publications [item 9cii]

The Board approved the annual statement of compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity for onward transmission to Senate and Council, subject to minor amendments.

22/35   Any other business [item 10]

On behalf of the Board, the Chair recorded thanks to Phil Newton (for whom this would have been his last meeting) for his contribution as Research Dean for Environment to this Board and to the wider University research remit, in particular highlighting his role in the agreement with the European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasting and work on the open research agenda.

22/36   Date of next meeting

4 November 2022, 9am

Annex to the UBRI minutes of 15 June 2022

Actions from 27 October 2021

21/33 Disclosure of Interests and Risk Register

Secretary to provide Board feedback to the Risk Management Group

Status: Completed

21/38 THE World University Rankings

Chair/Secretary to invite Paul Inman (PVC International) to a future meeting to discuss international collaboration.

Status: Open. Paul Inman (PVC International) unable to attend June meeting. Reschedule for 2022/23 session.

21/39 Individual Expectations Framework

Secretary/Workstream Chair to feedback Board comments to Pathway Project Manager

Status: Completed.

21/44 Responsible metrics and Open Research in promotions

Co-Chair of this Board and Chair of CORRI (Parveen Yaqoob) to liaise with the University Secretary to coordinate the establishment of the working group

Status: Completed

21/46 RETF allocation

Co-Chair (Dominik Zaum) to bring RETF paper outlining planned priorities to the next meeting

Status: Completed.

Actions from 25 January 2022

22/11 Acceptance of research and related funding

Chair to ask Director of Research Services to undertake a check of alignment against other policies. Chair to take policy to UEB for further review and bring back to UBRI for final approval

Status: Completed. Policy for approval provided for information to June 2022 meeting

Actions from 15 June 2022

22/22 Diversity and Inclusion data in research

Secretary to refine the report and share findings with relevant individuals/groups, for example Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Personal Titles group, Race Equality action team, and relevant D&I Staff networks

Planning and Strategy Office to discuss with Library the extraction of the full CentAUR dataset for future iterations

Status: ongoing

22/33   Research Travel Grants

Research Travel Grant Sub-Committee to develop a proposal for the use of the fund by research students studying at a distance

Status: ongoing