UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Research Committee held on 20 May 2021.

PRESENT: Professor John Senior (Chair)

Dr Susan Grey  Dr Rowland Hughes  Susan Akhtar
Professor David Barling  Dr Barbara Henry  Dr Laura Hamilton
Professor Philip Lucas  Professor Mike Page  Dr Philip Fiddaman
Dr Steven Adams  Professor Pandelis Kourtessis  Annalisa Jones
Dr Roger Levy  Jo Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisa Uttley  Ellie Hubbard  Leire Caselles Vallejo
Jill Lees (Minute 67 refers)

APOLOGIES:

Professor Constantine Sandis  Dr Chamu Kuppuswamy  Professor Wendy Wills
Professor Julia Williams  Professor Stephen Page  Dr David Ford
Bethan Adams  Vesna Manasieva  Catherine Manthorpe
Dr Lizzy Allman  Dr Elizabeth White  Dr Bill Worthington

59 CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS (IF ANY)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

60 NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

There were no new declarations of interest.

61 MEMBERSHIP

The Committee welcomed Dr Laura Hamilton to the Committee as a member under Category 9: Two (2) representatives of the contract/early career research staff.

(Agenda Paper 4, refers.)

62 IN ATTENDANCE

The Committee noted that Graham Davis would be in attendance in the absence of Dr David Ford and Beth Adams. Jill Lees would be in attendance for Item 9.

63 MINUTES - 25 FEBRUARY 2021

The Minutes of the meeting of 25 February 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record of the business conducted.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 5, refers.)

64 CENTRE FOR FUTURE SOCIETIES RESEARCH - MINUTE 46.6, REFERS

64.1 The Committee received a report from Professor Lubo Jankovic summarising the operation of the Centre for Future Societies Research, as agreed at the previous meeting.
64.2 The Committee noted the information detailed in the report and was satisfied that the Centre could operate without impinging on the activities of other centres and alongside them.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 6, refers.)

65 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no other matters arising from the Minutes not taken elsewhere on the agenda.

RESEARCH POLICY AND STRATEGY

66 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF) 2021

66.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Chair on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021.

66.2 The Committee noted that the University had successfully submitted the second stage of its Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission on Thursday 13 May 2021, a day ahead of the deadline.

66.3 During the six-week extension obtained by the University to complete the submission, all impact cases had been finalised. Some final tweaks had been made, particularly in relation to the impact of Covid-19.

66.4 Members acknowledged the hard work behind the University’s REF submission and thanked everyone involved.

Minute 66.5 is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

66.6 The Chair had also been invited to a UKRI/Research England event on 27 May 2021 entitled, ‘Exploring Options for Future Research Assessment’, which would look at the further development of assessment for University research. The Chair would feedback to the Committee about this in due course.

RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT

67 REPORT FROM THE RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT GROUP (RDG)

67.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Learning and Organisational Development Facilitation and Support Team Manager, Jill Lees, in respect of the Researcher Development Group (RDG).

67.2 The Committee noted that the Researcher Development Conference was taking place on Wednesday 9 June 2021. Postgraduate Research students were welcome to attend without the need to book.

67.3 The Legal and Compliance team had been working on the University’s Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) collaborative agreement and Vitae had accepted all of the amendments proposed. The Survey was expected to be up and running by the end of June 2021. It would be promoted over the month of June to try and get the best response possible.

67.4 The Committee also noted that the HR Excellence in Research award had been awarded to the University with no conditions, which was an excellent outcome. The University's next award review was due to take place in January 2023.

67.5 The Committee further noted that there were 10 places available for a 12-month programme with Advance HE called ‘Success on the Board’. The programme was targeted at those in research that belonged to groups currently underrepresented on higher education and research boards and governing bodies. Individuals would be asked to put themselves forward for this opportunity.
67.6 The Committee resolved that the opportunity for University staff to take part on the Success on the Board programme be promoted and taken forward.

DOCTORAL COLLEGE

68 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES)

68.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Director of the Doctoral College, Dr Susan Grey, on the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

68.2 The Survey had closed on Monday 17 May 2021 after being open for 57 days.

68.3 The Survey had had a response rate of 56%, which was over the target of 54%. This was a pleasing result given the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent cyber-attack on the University.

68.4 PRES 2021 results were expected in July 2021.

RESEARCH STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (RSMS)

69.1 The Committee received a report from the Assistant Registrar (Academic Services), Lisa Uttle, on the progress of the Research Management System (RSMS).

69.2 The Committee noted the information detailed in the report. If additional data was required by the Committee, the dashboard would need to be developed further.

69.3 Nine students were currently going through the examination process, which had gone live recently. More information would be available once these students had completed the examination process.

69.4 The number of doctoral awards was a metric included in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission. It was worth noting that doctoral programmes with few full-time students did not produce as many awards. Professional doctorates had a large proportion of part-time students with typically long completion times.

69.5 Distance-based research students could not be counted towards the University’s REF submission. However, they were part of the international strategy.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 11, refers.)

RESEARCH INTEGRITY

70 THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL AND TRAINING IMPLICATIONS

70.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Institutional Lead on Research Integrity, Dr Susan Grey, on the Nagoya Protocol and its training implications.

70.2 Information on the Nagoya Protocol could be accessed on HertsHub at the following link:


Minute 70.3 is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

RESEARCH OFFICE

71 REPORT FROM THE RESEARCH OFFICE

71.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Head of Research Grants, Annalisa Jones, on the activities of the Research Office.

71.2 The Committee noted that the Research Office had been busy working on the REF submission and research grants.
71.3 A new member of staff had joined the Research Office since the previous meeting and interviews were taking place shortly for another vacant post.

71.4 The Research Office was losing two key post holders in the Autumn. The Head of the Research Office, Catherine Manthorpe, and the Research Information and Governance Manager, Ellie Hubbard, were retiring in September and taking with them a considerable amount of expertise.

72 **RESEARCH GRANTS APPLICATIONS AND AWARDS**

72.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of Research Grants, Annalisa Jones, on research grant applications and awards.

72.2 The Committee noted the information detailed in the report, which included data for the period between the end of August 2020 and the end of April 2021.

72.3 In terms of applications and awards, numbers were slightly down in terms of value of applications and awards due to the two large awards from the previous year. Overall the University was in a good position.

72.4 There had been a slight increase in percentage conversion rate. However, staff were submitting many high value applications, which would bring the conversion rate down.

72.5 Confirmation of further awards were expected within the following two or three months.

72.6 The Committee acknowledged the need to keep forecasts realistic in the budget, which Finance were preparing.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 14, refers.)

**UPDATE REPORTS**

73 **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER**

73.1 The Committee received a report from the Deputy Director of Business Development, Phil Fiddaman, on Commercial and Enterprise Activity to May 2021 and technology transfer activity to 7 April 2021.

73.2 The Committee noted key areas in innovation, skills and apprenticeships, business services, University Enterprise Zone, and strategic and policy matters, as detailed in the report.

73.3 The Committee also noted information on the state of the intellectual property pipeline.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 15, refers.)

74 **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

74.1 The Committee received a report from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Office.

74.2 The Committee noted the information contained within the report, including the University’s strategic EDI objectives, the ongoing work on EDI charter marks, such as the Race Equality Charter, Athena Swan and the Disability Confident Scheme, and the establishment of the new EDI Board.

(Additional Confidential Agenda Paper 16, refers.)

75 **RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS**

75.1 The Committee received a report compiled by the Research and Scholarly Communications Manager, Dr Bill Worthington, on research information management and scholarly communications, from the Head of Academic Resources, Graham Davis.
75.2 The Committee noted the latest figures on the RIS portal, which presented work via research staff profiles, and UHRA, which was the repository for open access and long-term preservation of research outputs.

75.3 The report also showed the latest levels of compliance with the HEFCE REF Open Access Policy and the progress towards achieving the University Research KPI target.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 17, refers.)

76 LIBRARY AND COMPUTING SERVICES

76.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Head of Academic Resources on the activities of the Library and Computing Services.

76.2 In light of the recent cyber-attack on the University systems, members were reminded of their responsibility as individuals to keep their computers up to date, change their password as requested, etc.

OTHER BUSINESS

77 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD 2019/20

The Committee considered and approved its Annual Report to the Academic Board for 2019/2020.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 19, refers.)

78 CLERK’S REPORT

78.1 Schedule of meetings 2021/2022

All meetings were scheduled to be held at 09:30 hours in the Central Committee Room or online via MS Teams as confirmed by the Clerk at the time of issuing the agenda:

Tuesday, 19 October 2021
Tuesday, 15 February 2022
Tuesday, 24 May 2022.

78.2 Ethics Committee for Studies Involving Human Participants

The Committee noted the Minutes of the Ethics Committee meeting of 21 October 2020.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 20, refers.)

79 COUNTER TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015 (PREVENT)

There were no other matters relevant to the Act not dealt with earlier in the meeting.

80 PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

There were no further people developments needs not discussed earlier on the agenda.

81 RISK

There were no risks inherent in matters dealt with by the Committee during the meeting but not discussed when the items concerned had been taken.

82 EMERGENCY BUSINESS

82.1 A member requested a discussion regarding covering the cost of personal protective equipment (PPE).
82.2 The matter was not for decision by the Research Committee and would be dealt with outside the meeting.

83 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Research Committee was scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 26 October 2021 from 09:30 hours in the Central Committee Room - MacLaurin Building.