UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Research Committee held on 26 October 2021.

PRESENT: Professor John Senior (Chair)
Dr Lindsay Bottoms  Dr Rowland Hughes  Dr Kate Asante
Dr Steven Adams  Professor Mike Page  Elizabeth Nolan
Dr Roger Levy  Professor Pandelis Kourtessis  Janice Sablitzky
Professor Wendy Wills  Samantha Kelly  Mohammed Ilyas
Professor Stephen Page  Dr Laura Hamilton  Dr Elizabeth White

IN ATTENDANCE:
Dr Bill Worthington  Leire Caselles Vallejo

APOLOGIES:
Dr Susan Grey  Professor David Barling  Professor Philip Lucas
Professor Farshid Amirabdollahian  Professor Constantine Sandis  Dr Chamu Kuppuswamy
Professor Julia Williams  Dr Barbara Henry  Jo Stuart
David Gillard  Bethan Adams  Susan Akhtar
Vesna Manasieva  Lisa Uttley  Annah Whyton

1  CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS (IF ANY)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2  NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

There were no new declarations of interest.

3  ACADEMIC BOARD STANDING ORDERS

The Committee noted the Academic Board Standing Orders, effective from 1 December 2018, which could be found at the following link:


4  TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The Committee noted its terms of reference, composition and membership.

4.2 The Committee welcomed the following new members:

4.2.1 David Gillard, Interim Chief Information Officer, in Category 6;
4.2.2 Dr Kate Asante, Director of Business Development, in Category 10;
4.2.3 Liz Nolan, Director of the Research Office, in Category 11;
4.2.4 Jan Sablitsky, Head of Research Grants, in Category 12;
4.2.5 Mohammed Ilyas, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, in Category 13; and
4.2.6 Annah Whyton, Research Information and Governance Manager, as an officer in attendance.
   (Agenda Paper 5, refers.)
5 MINUTES - 20 MAY 2021

The Committee confirmed the Minutes of the meeting of 20 May 2021 as an accurate record of the business conducted.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 6, refers.)

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not being taken elsewhere on the agenda.

RESEARCH POLICY AND STRATEGY

7 REPORT FROM THE PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE)

7.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), and Chair to the Committee, Professor John Senior.

7.2 The Committee noted that, following the previous meeting of the Committee, the Chair had attended a workshop organised by Research England to explore wide ranging options for research assessment, focusing on processes around the world and discussing the pros and cons. The review was intended to be exhausting and be followed by a consultation in the Autumn of 2021. However, the consultation had now be delayed until Spring 2022 due to some rethinking on the part of the government.

7.3 The date of publication of REF 2021 results had been adjusted from April to 12 May 2022 to account for the pre-election period during April and at the start of May 2022. Universities would get their own results on 9 May 2022.

7.4 The UK Innovation Strategy had been published over the summer, although it had not attracted a lot of media attention. There would be opportunity for discussion of the new strategy at a Research and Enterprise Network of Universities (RENU) event in November 2022. The Chair had been involved in organising the event in his capacity as Chair of RENU and would report on discussions at the next meeting.

7.5 The Committee further noted that the second phase of the research publicity campaign was about to commence. The second phase would focus on climate change and sustainability in the lead up to COP26.

RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT

8 REPORT FROM THE RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT GROUP (RDG)

8.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Chair of Researcher Development Group, Dr Liz White.

8.2 The Committee noted that a very successful #UHResDev 21 (the biennial Researcher Development Conference) had taken place on-line on Wednesday 9 June 2021, with over 100 members of staff attending. The opening presentation by Professor John Senior about our REF statement and the Keynote by Rachel Cox from Vitae on researcher wellbeing and mental health had been well-received. The parallel sessions and lunchtime opportunities for networks to showcase their work also provided a lot of interest. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many appreciating the accessibility and on-line organisation.

8.3 Going forward, the plan was to run an on-line conference with linked on-campus networking events, which were missed by some attendees. A full report was available on the RDG webpages https://www.herts.ac.uk/research/research-management/research-development/researcher-development-group and slides and recordings of presentations were available on HertsHub https://herts365.sharepoint.com/sites/UHResearch/SitePages/ResDev21.aspx
8.4 Central Induction

Central Induction had featured input regarding the support available to researchers at the University for the first time this year. The opening presentation included slides about research and encouraging new staff members to have early conversations about developing as a researcher. The Research Office was one of 4 departments that featured in the marketplace and had been well attended.

8.5 HR Excellence in Research Award (HREiR)

The HR Excellence in Research Award action plan was ambitious. Responsibility for the actions lay across many people and departments in the University. The plan would be updated by December 2021. An annual report and update was a requirement of the award. The report and updated action plan would be made available to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and Chair of the Committee, Professor John Senior to share with the Chief Executive’s Group before publication on the website.

8.6 Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) results

8.6.1 The CEDARS results were being analysed. Highlights so far were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Staff believe recruitment was…</th>
<th>UH Research Staff believe recruitment was…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit-based</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Not offered any induction: 15%
- Not offered any induction at UH: 0%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participated in appraisal</th>
<th>Participated in appraisal at UH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Staff</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior/Established</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.6.2 A full report would be drawn up against the aggregate national data available from Vitae. The results would inform the HREiR award action plan, as they provided baseline against which to compare future developments.

8.6.3 130 members of staff had completed the survey, which compared to previously 120 completing the PIRLS + CROS surveys. This was similar to the national average response rate of around 20%.

8.6.4 Vitae had run a workshop for institutions on using their CEDARS results. The following ways of using the data were suggested:

- keeping the data in HR and using it to inform provision e.g. if there were some Schools where there was an expressed interest in a certain type of training etc;
- using the ‘you said… we did…’ message to indicate that CEDARS results were being used and thus encouraging increased response rate in the future.
8.6.5 Dissemination of the results was being prepared. Several options were being considered, including a possible high-profile event for staff.

**DOCTORAL COLLEGE**

9 **POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES) 2021**

9.1 The Committee received a report by the Director of the Doctoral College, Dr Susan Grey, on the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2021 results.

9.2 The Committee was pleased to note the excellent results from PRES 2021 as detailed in the report submitted. The response rate was above half of eligible students (57%) so there was confidence that the results reflected the research student experience at the University.

9.3 Scores on research culture were lower than previously in 2019 when they were outstanding but still above average for the sector. The Doctoral College believed that this was due to the pandemic, which had impeded the usual networking events on campus.

9.4 Results were also available per School and action plans would be developed accordingly.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 10, refers.)

**RESEARCH INTEGRITY**

10 **ITEMS FOR REPORT IN RESPECT OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY (IF ANY)**

11.1 The Committee received a report from the Chair in respect of Research Integrity.

11.2 The Committee noted that a small group including the Chair, the Director of the Doctoral College, Dr Susan Grey, Professor Wendy Wills and the Manager of Research Information and Governance, Annah Whyton, had met and discussed the Self-Assessment Tool for The Concordat to Support Research Integrity by the UK Research and Integrity Office (UKRIO).

11.3 In summary, the group had found that practices and training based on the UKRIO guidance looked fit for purpose but would benefit from refreshing in some areas. A more detailed report on findings would be forthcoming in due course.

11.4 The Committee also noted that a research practice guide and a course for researcher development on open research and reproducibility were also being worked on.

**UPDATE REPORTS**

11 **REPORT FROM THE RESEARCH OFFICE**

11.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of the Research Office, Liz Nolan, and the Head of Research Grants, Janice Sablitzky, on the activities of the Research Office, including research grant applications and awards.

11.2 The Committee noted that the Research Office had experienced a significant number of staff changes recently. Additionally, a long-standing vacancy for a Research Costings Administrator was being filled, which was hoped would lessen the burden on the Research Grants team.

11.3 The Committee also noted research applications and awards figures for the period between 1st August 2020 and 31 July 2021. Data for each school was discussed. Schools were encouraged to articulate what support they needed from the Research Office to improve the quality of higher value applications and achieve their income targets.
Minute 11.4 is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 12, refers.)

12 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

12.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Business Development and Engagement, Kate Asante, on EBD commercial and enterprise from August to October 2021.

12.2 The Committee noted and discussed the information within the report, which included the key areas of innovation, skills and apprenticeships, business support services and the University Enterprise Zone. Going forward, the Director of Business Development and Engagement would present the report in a different format to better serve the Committee’s business.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 13, refers.)

13 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

13.1 The Committee received an oral report from the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Mohammed Ilyas, on EDI matters relevant to the business of the Committee.

13.2 There had been significant activity on the EDI front this year. At the moment, the team was working on disability history month. Job descriptions were also being reviewed and new staff recruited. The EDI Board met every three months to drive the strategic agenda for EDI. Academic and professional EDI teams had been formed and had helped develop the EDI, pay gap, awarding gap, etc action plans.

13.3 The report on the University’s statutory equality duty, which included data on protective characteristics, would be developed and shared via several committees, including the Academic Board.

13.4 The Committee also noted updates on:

i Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), which would be signed off by Heads of SBU as agreed at the last EDI Board;

ii Bullying and Harassment Officers, whose role and training were being reviewed;

iii the Race Equality Charter Mark, which the University had been successful in obtaining;

iv Athena Swan, which had undergone a review and had been drastically transformed;

v the Disability Confident scheme for employers, which the University was working to achieve at level 2 from the current level 1;

vi the LGBT Charter mark, which the University was considering making a submission for;

vii the mandatory EDI essentials course for staff, which had been reviewed and updated;

viii Trans Awareness Week in November 2021, which would include workshops;

ix other events planned to celebrate diversity and cohesion;

x International Men’s Day.
14 RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS

14.1 The Committee received a report from the Research and Scholarly Communications Manager, Dr Bill Worthington.

14.2 The Committee noted and discussed the information contained in the report, which covered Research Information System (RIS) and UH Research Archive (UHRA) figures, an update on the Research KPI target related to Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI), an update on Open Access Transformative Agreements, including negotiations with Elsevier, the REF 2021 audit and UKRI’s Open Access Policy 2021.

14.3 In respect of UKRI Open Access Policy changes, there was concern that the immediate open access requirement was being mandated without providing resources to support it.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 15, refers.)

15 LIBRARY AND COMPUTING SERVICES

Minute 15 is confidential and available to members and officers in attendance only.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 16, refers.)

OTHER BUSINESS

16 CLERK’S REPORT

16.1 Schedule of meetings 2021/22

The Committee noted that 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, 26 October 2021
Tuesday, 15 February 2022
Tuesday, 24 May 2022.

16.2 Ethics Committee for Studies Involving Human Participants

16.2.1 The Committee noted that the Ethics Committee meeting of 10 February 2021 had been cancelled.

16.2.2 The Minutes of the Ethics Committee meeting of 28 April 2021 would be noted at the next meeting.

16.3 Research Degrees Board

The Committee noted that Minutes of the Research Degrees Board meetings were available for inspection from Governance Services on request.

17 COUNTER TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015 (PREVENT)

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

18 PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

There were no people development needs to refer to Human Resources.

19 RISK

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

There was no emergency business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Research Committee would be held on Tuesday, 15 February 2022 from 09:30 hours in the Central Committee Room, MacLaurin Building and via MS Teams.

Items for the Agenda should be notified to the Clerk, Leire Caselles Vallejo (‘e’-mail l.caselles-vallejo@herts.ac.uk) by 25 January 2022 and reports submitted by 1 February 2022.