

# University Research Committee

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## Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Friday, 21 November 2014**

Duration of meeting: **10.00 to 12.00**

Location: **G5.05, High Wycombe**

### Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Shân Wareing	Vice Chancellor's Office	Ex officio
Anne Evans	Academic Quality Directorate	Officer
Miriam Moir	Academic Quality Directorate	Officer
John Boylan	Chair of RDC / Head of Research - DMM	Ex officio
Florin Ioras	DMM	Nominated member
Juliet Simpson	DMM	Nominated member
Colin Martin	S&H	Nominated member
Margaret Greenfields	S&H	Nominated member

### Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Vicky Vass	Pro Vice Chancellor - DMM	Ex officio
Alison Chambers	Pro Vice Chancellor – S&H	Ex officio
Barbara Dexter	Learning & Teaching Directorate	Ex officio
Connor Baker	SU Officer	Ex officio
Geraldine Walters	Chair of UREP	Ex officio
Carol Pook	Deputy Chair of UREP	Ex officio
Sue Procter	Head of Research – S&H	Ex officio

### Absent

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership

### Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

14.25 No conflicts of interest were declared.

### **Minutes of the previous meeting – 23 May 2014**

14.26 The minutes were approved as an accurate record

### **Matters arising from the minutes not appearing on the agenda**

14.27 There were no further matters.

### **Status of actions from the previous meeting**

14.28 The status of actions was noted.

### **Chair's report**

14.29 There was nothing to report that was not on the agenda.

### **Terms of Reference and Membership**

14.30 The Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference and Membership. The membership would be updated to include a Postgraduate Research Student Representative / Students Union representative and the Director of Learning & Teaching. Additional people would be co-opted from working groups on to the Committee as appropriate.

**Action: Secretary**

14.31 It was noted that a new member would need to be nominated by the Faculty of Design, Media & Management to serve on the Committee with effect from February 2015, and that the name of the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee would have to be amended for forthcoming meetings in 2014-15.

**Action: Secretary**

### **Progress against institutional action plan**

14.32 Progress against the institutional action plan was reviewed.

1) A project plan to achieve RDAP would be taken to SMT in January 2015. This would include consideration of governance structure and resourcing issues as a number of senior people would have leading roles, alongside a realistic timeframe.

**Action: Chair**

A speaker from an institution who was recently awarded RDAP would be invited to present at the Spring Research Conference.

**Action: Chair**

14.33 2) The Chair reported that steady progress had been made by line managers in identification of staff who were currently active in research and scholarship against RDAP criteria.

It was agreed that a list of all staff on academic contracts would be reviewed by the Chair and Human Resources to ensure that all contractual arrangements were appropriate for the roles being undertaken.

**Action: Chair**

A mapping exercise would be carried out of the doctoral status of all academics to include numbers with PhDs and Professional Doctorates and current year of study of those undertaking doctorates.

**Action: Secretary**

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Mitigating actions needed to be considered with regard to retaining staff with PhDs and recruiting staff with PhDs. Special consideration was required to retain/incentivise those staff who achieve their PhD while at Bucks to continue working at the University.
- There was a need to ensure that the type of doctorate a member of staff was undertaking was appropriate for their career path.
- Any remission for undertaking doctoral study should be linked to outputs.
- There was scope for enhanced mentoring, particularly in practice-led fields.
- All staff should be recruited against a clear understanding of the current institutional trajectory
- There was a requirement to demonstrate how research would explicitly feed into developing curricula.

14.34 3) Anticipated areas for inclusion in REF2020 were identified:

- Art & Design
- Business & Management
- Sport & Health
- Nursing
- Social Policy
- Education

It was agreed that there should be specific investment in early career and mid-career researchers in the above areas.

Provisional UOA Leads would be identified for each Unit to be responsible for tracking individuals in their areas and to strengthen clusters.

**Action: Chair; Heads of Research**

14.35 4) The designated areas above would underpin related activities with regard to Research Institutes and PhD students.

14.36 5) Line Managers who are not currently research active would be supported to ensure they understood the requirements for their staff.

14.37 6) The Principal Registrar reported that a meeting had been held in July 2014 with the Director for Learning & Teaching and the Heads of Research to consider staff development and as a result an action plan linked to the RDAP criteria had been devised. This would be incorporated into the Progress Plan to SMT in January 2015.

**Action: Chair**

It was noted that a culture change to become more inventive and challenge interdisciplinary boundaries in curriculum design.

The cultural significance of academic line managers conducting research was emphasised, and the need for the University to expect managers to continue to undertake research.

14.38 7) The importance of recruiting staff with PhDs had been highlighted above. Additionally all departments would be expected to enable existing staff to undertake greater scholarly and research activity.

- 14.39 8) The Chair reported that the bids for the PhD studentships exemplified the strategic direction of the University in undertaking research that informed the curriculum and supported relationships with partners.
- 14.40 9) It was noted that there was always demand for internal promotion to Reader and Professor. However this represented an ongoing cost, and a case could be made for using the funding more wisely to support staff undertaking PhDs and early/mid-career researchers. This would be investigated further.

**Action: Chair**

It was considered that there needed to be a clearer articulation of the University's professional and leadership expectations of Readers and Professors.

**Action: Heads of Research**

- 14.41 10) The Chair reported that a project had commenced to develop effective online profiles.

### **Alignment of Research Centres/Institutes with REF UOAs**

- 14.42 The alignment of Research Centres/Institutes with REF UOAs had been covered earlier in the agenda.

### **REF correspondence – impact case studies**

- 14.43 HEFCE had requested that institutions made their impact case studies available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence, where users would be free to share, copy and redistribute the material. Members agreed that this should be supported and that the Chair would ensure an email to this effect was sent to HEFCE.

**Action: Chair**

### **Open Access Policy (URC14.13)**

- 14.44 The Secretary introduced a draft Open Access Policy. The policy requires all authors on receipt of an acceptance email from the publisher to forward the journal details and final peer reviewed text to a dedicated email address in the library before signing a publisher's Copyright Transfer Agreement. On receipt of the manuscript the library team would check the publisher's model for licencing copyright options and advise if a standard agreement could be used or if an amendment needed to be negotiated with an addendum to cover digital use. Authors would also have to comply with the maximum embargo periods permitted by the funding councils for REF.

The Committee endorsed the policy and agreed that awareness of the process needed to be raised as widely as possible through a variety of methods to include a personalised letter to all academics, to be produced by the Research Unit and sent from the Chair.

**Action: Research Unit, Chair**

### **Research Data Management Policy (URC14.14)**

- 14.45 The Secretary introduced a draft policy on Research Data Management. The policy aims to ensure that research data across the University is preserved so that results

can be verified and data reused in the future. The Committee approved the draft policy and agreed with the recommendation that a Working Group be established to develop an implementation plan and refine the policy as necessary. The Group would include representatives from the Library, IT, the Research Unit, and the Heads of Research and/or nominees. This would be delayed until new appointments (Director of IT, Head of Research – DMM) had been made but constituted by Easter.

**Action: Chair**

### **Equipment.data**

14.46 A request was made for items (equipment or facilities) to be recommended for inclusion in equipment.data, an online portal designed to improve efficiency and stimulate greater collaboration in the sector. It was agreed that an email should be sent to Heads of Schools for items they would wish to be included.

**Action: Secretary**

### **Progress towards identifying new partner to validate Bucks research degrees**

14.47 The Chair reported that a number of possible partners to validate Bucks research degrees had been identified and an approach had been made to several Universities. One possible partner had responded positively, and an initial visit had been made where it was established that there would be a number of mutual benefits to the partnership, particularly in terms of collaboration. Bucks would receive a visit shortly from the potential partner as the first stage of a due diligence process.

It was noted that existing students would be awarded degrees from Coventry University and a further agreement would be required to formally cover their time from January 2015 until completion.

### **Resourcing of Research Activity (URC14.15)**

14.48 The Principal Registrar presented a paper on resourcing research activity. It was noted that the University's research degree regulations limit a number of activities to a small number of academics who, by virtue of their roles were often away from the University on business.

It was agreed that the areas of critical weakness would be summarised quoting specific examples and forwarded to the Chair to be included in a paper which would be taken to SMT in January.

**Action: Principal Registrar, Chair**

### **EndNote licences**

14.49 A request had been received from the Research Degrees Committee to consider the purchase of a site licence for EndNote. This would be added to the paper on resourcing to be considered by SMT in January 2015.

**Action: Chair**

### **Research Income 2013-2014 (URC14.16)**

- 14.50 A paper was presented to the Committee on the research income for 2013/14 to be returned to HESA shortly. A number of items that members were expecting to see did not appear to have been included. A request was made that the data be cleansed as far as possible and actions taken to improve the return for the following year. The Financial Controller would be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to explain what steps were being taken to address these issues.

**Action: Secretary**

### **Report from Research Degrees Committee (URC14.17)**

- 14.51 The Chair of the Research Degrees Committee presented a report from the Research Degrees Committee. The following points were noted:

- The collaborative arrangement with Coventry University will come to a close following a positive and productive working relationship since 2009.
- A positive outcome had been received from the quality audit undertaken by Brunel University with a number of commendations and no recommendations.
- Excellent results had been obtained in the internal postgraduate research experience survey conducted in Spring 2014 with 95% satisfaction in the supervision scale.
- Research Student Tutors had been appointed to co-ordinate pastoral and academic support for research students.
- An Annual Review and Evaluation report had been completed.

It was noted that the above presented a very positive picture but there were concerns about support for students with the departure of a number of senior colleagues. The Chair (RDC) was requested to summarise these concerns alongside the need to recruit/appoint and these would be appended to the SMT paper for January.

**Action: Chair (RDC), Chair**

- 14.52 Consideration was also given to the requirements for Research Supervisor Accreditation, namely to publish and undertake relevant CPD. Concerns had been expressed that the requirement for international quality of outputs was too stringent. Members agreed that there should be no diminution of the standard in order to comply with the QAA Quality Code. The Research Supervisor Accreditation document would be revised to ensure there was clarity in the requirements and placed on Blackboard.

**Action: Secretary**

### **Report from University Ethics Panel (URC14.18)**

- 14.53 A report was presented from the University Ethics Panel. A concern was raised by the Panel that there were a number of applications which had been rejected on methodological grounds or where there was a lack of theory underpinning the research. It was also reported that tracking of all taught undergraduate/postgraduate activity was now taking place at School/Department level. A full discussion of the above points would be held at the next University Research Committee meeting in February 2015.

**Proposed revision to remit of Research group (URC14.19)**

14.54 Prof Juliet Simpson presented a paper proposing a name change of the 'Art Cultures, Practices and Debates Research Group' to the 'Art, Design and New Media Research Group'. The new configuration would group strengths which, to date, had been organised in distinct groups. Within the overarching group research would be configured in three specific areas:

1. Design and cultural heritage
2. Landscapes, space and cultural production and
3. Art and theories and practices of 'identity' and cultural 'performance'.

The name change was approved.

**Any Other Business**

14.55 The Chair thanked Prof John Boylan and Prof Juliet Simpson who were shortly to leave the University for all their support for research over many years.

**Date of next meeting**

27 February 2015