

APPROVED

The University of Manchester

Senate

Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Research)

27 March 2024

Present: Professor Colette Fagan (Chair), Professor Philippa Browning, Professor Richard Curry, Professor Maggie Gale, Professor Nigel Hooper, Professor Andy Trafford, Professor Arpana Verma, and Professor Melissa Westwood.

In Attendance for all items: Dr Catherine Headley (Head of Business Engagement and Knowledge Exchange), Dr John Marsh (Senior Governance Manager), Dr Andrew Walsh (Director of Research and Business Engagement Services), and Jane Holland (minutes).

Apologies: Professor Stephen Flint, Professor David Matthews, Professor Mahesan Nirmalan, Professor James Pattison, Professor Thomas Schmidt, Professor Chris Taylor, and Professor Richard Winpenny.

1 Declarations of Interest

Noted: That there were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Agreed: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024.

3 Matters Arising

Noted:

- a) the Matters Arising update;
- b) a schedule of policies for review during the academic cycle would be presented to the next meeting, and would include non-PGR policies with a view to incorporating these into a single annual process. **Action: Director of Research and Business Engagement Services**

4 Forward Agenda: Schedule of Committee Business for 2023-24

Noted:

- a) the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Research) Forward Agenda;
- b) a regular oral update on the REF 2029 had been included in the Forward Agenda;
- c) the Forward Agenda would be revised to reflect that the Research Strategy Assurance Report would not be scheduled for presentation to the 15 May meeting. The data would be included in the Annual Performance Review for presentation to the October 2024 meeting, as part of the wider assurance cycle;
- d) a briefing on the recent PGR successes would be presented to the next meeting;

- e) members were encouraged to suggest briefings for inclusion on the Forward Agenda for the next academic year. The schedule for 2024-25 would include an update on health and safety in research laboratories.

5 Chair's Update

Noted:

- a) a Research Strategy Group showcase had been conducted as part of a familiarisation programme for the incoming President and Vice-Chancellor, focussing on the University's research strategy and approach. The incoming President expressed his support for continued focus on building research leadership at all career stages, interdisciplinary research (will also supporting the importance of fundamental and disciplinary-based research), and accelerating and deepening research impact;
- b) routine decision-making around fund allocation was currently in progress;
- c) a number of recent research-related successes had been achieved, details of which were currently embargoed and would be announced in the next Senate report;
- d) the Update would include input from the Associate Vice-Presidents for Research in future.

6 Briefing on the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)

Noted:

- a) an oral briefing on the KEF including definition and perspectives;
- b) the University's KEF3 result for local growth and regeneration had resulted in a low engagement outcome. The University's institutional statement and the civic engagement agenda were considered robust. However, it was recognised that the KEF had a restricted number of metrics feeding into it. The research framework for Innovation Manchester and accelerator programmes would contribute positively to the KEF result;
- c) the KEF exercise was designed to cover a breadth of knowledge exchange nationally and was designed to ensure that institutions without a substantial research portfolio could contribute. The KEF was considered to be a useful comparison tool and a measure of specialism;
- d) in summary, compared with the Russell Group cluster, the University displayed strong performance for an institution of its type in its chosen areas of focus;
- e) the briefing paper would be sent to the Chair for inclusion in a wider research-related document for the incoming President and Vice-Chancellor. A bullet point would be added to provide information about the cluster, detailing the universities within the cluster and the University's ranking; **Action: Head of Business Engagement and Knowledge Exchange**
- f) the KEF was considered to be in its infancy and would likely evolve, leading to possible funding in the future. The Chair had been appointed to the Research Council Board from 1 April 2024 and confirmed that a review of HEIF and QR funding was on the agenda. Some concern was raised about the potential shift in transparency about how universities used and report on QR funding.

7 Update to the Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy

Received: the update to the Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy.

Agreed: to approve the update to the Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy.

8 Update to the Re-submission and Re-examination of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy

Received: the update to the Re-submission and Re-examination of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy.

Noted: it was confirmed that supervisors would continue to consult with students in the event of a new examiner being appointed.

Agreed: to approve the update to the Re-submission and Re-examination of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy.

9 Update to the Presentation of Theses Policy

Received: the update to the Presentation of Theses Policy.

Agreed: to approve the update to the Presentation of Theses Policy.

10 Update to the Supervision Policy for Postgraduate Research Degrees

Received: the update to the Supervision Policy for Postgraduate Research Degrees.

Agreed: to approve the update to the Supervision Policy for Postgraduate Research Degrees.

11 Change of Circumstances Policy and Procedure Review and Consultation

Received and noted: the Change of Circumstances Policy and Procedure Review and Consultation.

12 REF 2029 Update

Noted: an oral update on the REF 2029, which included the following recent announcements:

- a) REF Open Access Consultation
 - i. the purpose of the Policy was to outline the [open access requirements](#) for the next REF exercise. The significant change from REF 2021 was the introduction of an open access requirement for longform publications;
 - ii. the Library was leading on the institutional response which would be presented at the May 2024 meeting of the Research Strategy Group for approval. The deadline for consultation was 17 June 2024;
 - iii. Research England intended to publish the final REF 2029 Open Access Policy in the summer or autumn 2024. Until this date, institutions could continue to apply the REF 2021 Open Access Policy.
- b) REF PCE Developments
 - i. in response to a request from across the sector, there would be a PCE pilot exercise. Expressions of interest were open and Faculty VDRs were considering readiness and capacity to take part from July to November 2024. Participating HEIs would also need to produce an institutional level environment statement. The deadline for expressions of interest for HEIs to take part in the pilot would be midday on 24 April 2024;
 - ii. participation as a panel member assessing PCE submissions would be opening shortly;
 - iii. engagement with the project to develop appropriate indicators and assessment of PCE would be through workshops;
 - iv. UoAs relevant to UoM were:
 - Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy (UoA 3);
 - Biological Sciences (UoA 5);
 - Earth Systems and Environmental Science (UoA 7);
 - Computer Science and Informatics (UoA 11)
 - Business and Management Studies (UoA 17);
 - History (UoA 28);
 - Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies (UoA33).

13 Assurance of Quality and Standards in Research – recent reports received by the Planning and Resources Committee

Noted: That there had been no associated report items to the Planning and Resources Committee during this period.

14 Uniac Review of the Board-Senate Protocol for Academic Governance

Noted:

- a) the Uniac audit would be a review of academic governance and part of the Audit and Risk Committee's 2023-24 Audit Plan. It would provide advice and recommendations on the academic governance mechanisms that were implemented at the start of 2022-23 to strengthen academic assurance and OfS compliance. The two academic quality and standards committees were a key element of this;
- b) a paper would be included on the 17 April Senate agenda which would provide further details and timescales for the review;
- c) the terms of reference for the review were currently being drafted by Uniac, and stakeholders identified. Senate and both of its committees were key stakeholders, and an opportunity would be provided for all members of Senate to contribute.

15 Information Items

Noted:

- a) [Research and Impact @ Manchester](#) – providing details of the University's research and impact activities and associated events;
- b) Social Responsibility Update: report to 14 February Senate;
- c) IBESG Briefing on Innovate UK;
- d) no requests for agenda items had been received. Any such requests should be made to the Governance Office at the earliest opportunity;
- e) that the next meeting was scheduled for 15 May 2024 (online).