

UNIVERSITY BOARD FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

22/37 A meeting of the University Board for Research and Innovation was held on Wednesday 16 November 2022 at 9.30am on Microsoft Teams.

Present

Dominik Zaum, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (Chair)
Parveen Yaqoob, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Adrian Bell, Research Dean (Prosperity & Resilience)
Rowan Sutton, Research Dean (Environment)
Adrian Williams, Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies and Researcher Development
Mona Ashok, Business Informatics System and Accounting, ECR representative
Stuart Hunt, University Librarian
Richard Frazier, Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences, Senate member
Oscar Minto, Education Officer (RUSU)
Nathan Helsby, Planning and Strategy Office [Secretary]

Apologies

Carol Wagstaff, Research Dean (Agriculture, Food and Health)
John Gibbs, Research Dean (Heritage & Creativity)
Daniella La Penna, Department of Languages and Culture, Senate member
Mark Fellowes, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic Planning & Resource)

22/38 Disclosure of interests [item 2]

Board members were reminded of the requirement to disclose interests, and to inform the Chairs of any personal interest in agenda items at Board meetings.

22/39 Research governance [item 3]

The Board received the current research governance structure, along with the Board's membership and Terms of Reference for 2022/23. The Board approved the Terms of Reference and the membership, noting the following:

Rowan Sutton was attending his first meeting as the new Research Dean for the Environment Theme. The Board noted that the University had now appointed the job share for the other half of the Environment Research Dean role: Tom Oliver.

The Commercial Director role no longer existed at the University, this position on the Board being replaced by the Director of Research Services.

The Finance Business Partner for research had been added to the membership

There remained a vacancy for the research staff representative. It was hoped to have someone in place at the next meeting.

There were two new RUSU officers, the Education Officer and the Postgraduate Research Part-time Officer

University of Reading Impact Strategy 2022-2028

The Board received for information the already launched Impact Strategy. Initial work would also be supported by an Impact Accelerator account in the humanities.

22/44 Research Culture [item 7b]

The Board received a verbal update on the work of UCRI on research culture. The University had received a ring-fenced QR allocation from Research England funding of £300k, part of which had been used to commission work by colleagues in the Henley Business School on the understanding of current and desired research culture at the University. This was conducted through focus groups with stakeholders; amongst other things, initial findings had identified some possible issues relating to mid-career researchers, which would be followed up. The allocation would also be supporting work on research integrity, leadership training and development, research prizes, statistics, software support, and other culture-related projects.

22/45 Research awards and applications end of FQ4 2021/22 [item 7ci]

The Board received a summary of research awards/applications/income for 2021/22. At £35m, the value of research awards was slightly down on the previous year, and 80% to its annual target; there had not yet been a bounce back to pre-pandemic levels. This was partly on account of the phasing of UKRI schemes and delay of the UKRI underwrite of EU awards. The number and value of applications dropped considerably in 2021/22 (from £156m to £108m), which was a cause for concern, although it did imply a greater success rate. UCRI would look further into this drop and, with reference to more recent data from FQ1 2022/23, consider future actions.

Action: UCRI to explore further the drop in research application activity in 2021/22 and consider future actions

22/46 THE World University Rankings 2023 [item 7cii]

The Board received a summary of the University outcomes in the THE World University Rankings 2023. The University had returned to the top 200 at 198 and had improved its UK ranking to 26th of over 100 UK institutions in the ranking. The improvement had been driven primarily by an increase in the number of academics nominating the University in the research reputation survey. Next year's table would include refinement of bibliometrics, along with additional metrics on international student mobility and technology transfer. At subject level, two subjects (Physical Sciences and Education) were in the top 100, and the University was in the top quartile for most of the subject areas where it was represented. The Board noted that the University had established a rankings group to review league table performance and identify where it could take some practical and cultural steps to optimise its performance.

22/47 University research and innovation related KP0.6 (r)-7.7

Annex to the UBRI minutes of 16 November 2022: open actions

Actions from 27 October 2021

21/38 THE World University Rankings

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

Status (November 2022): Paul Inman was unable to attend the June 2022 meeting because of diary commitments. He will be leaving the University at the end of November 2022. Until a replacement is appointed, Dominik Zaum will oversee international research collaboration and funding opportunities.

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 (November 2022): Ongoing, to be reviewed in advance of the data collection for the 2023 report A

refined report has been shared with the Dean 1 (y)--42l Ceno.2 (t)-ari8.6 (e)-6 (a)-3.2 .5 3 (g)2.6 (r)11 tDat552.6 (I)7.9 /P
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Actions from 16 November 2022

22/43 REF 2021 Reflections and wider strategic changes [item 7a]: Research Outputs Development and Quality Assessment for REF

Chair/Secretary to bring CRIS business case to next meeting.

22/45 Research awards and applications end of FQ4 2021/22 [item 7ci]

UCRI to explore further the drop in research application activity in 2021/22 and consider future actions.

22/52 Research Endowment Trust [item 10]

In discussion with the Chairs, the Finance Business Partner to draw up a more detailed report for subsequent meeting.