



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES 28 APRIL 2022

Minutes of Meeting 02/2022 of the University Research Committee held on 28 April 2022 via Zoom.

Present:

Prof J Martin (*Chair*)

D/Prof D Adams
Prof M Batterham
Ms A Boyle
Prof J Chen
Prof K Clapham
Prof H Ecroyd
Prof P Innis
Prof P Kelly
Prof L Kervin

Prof H Li
Ms S Martin
S/Prof P McGuirk
Prof L Moxham
A/Prof G Peleckis
Prof M Randle
D/Prof R Roberts
Prof G Rose
S/Prof A Sims

A/Prof D Skropeta
Dr T Stutchbury
Dr M Thompson
Mr G Tomka
Dr E Twyford
D/Prof A van Oijen
S/Prof S Ville
Prof J Wang

Minute Secretary:

Ms J Evans

PART 1 OFFICIAL BUSINESS

1.1 1.1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair delivered an Acknowledgment of Country.

1.1.2 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from S/Prof Sharon Robinson, Dr Paul Di Pietro, Prof Heath Ecroyd, Prof Christian Ritz, S/Prof Pascal Perez, D/Prof Stuart Kaye and Prof Wilma Vialle.

A/Prof Danielle Skropeta attended for Prof Heath Ecroyd and Prof Huijun Li attended for Prof Christian Ritz.

Karen Lovasz attended for discussion of agenda item 3.2 and Stefan Delfgou attended for discussion of agenda item 3.3.

1.2 Arrangement of the Agenda

1.2.1 Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

1.2.1 Starring of Items

Agenda items 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 were starred for the meeting.

Resolved (17/2022)

That the University Research Committee adopt the draft resolutions for the un-starred items.

PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

There was no Confidential Business

PART 3 GENERAL BUSINESS

3.1 Association for Mathematical Research and Other Organisations

The Committee discussed a new mathematics organisation, the 'Association for Mathematical Research' that was recently founded in the US. Concerns have been expressed that the Association's Board of Directors features a very high representation of people who have publicly expressed negative opinions about attempts to improve diversity and equity in hiring, and particularly the inclusion of diversity statements. Discussion continued about whether this issue is unique to the mathematics discipline and what should be done going forward to help, especially young researchers and students, to learn to recognise these types of organisations. Committee members advised that they are unaware of this happening within any of their research areas, noting the opposite is more likely with a strong push to promote diversity and inclusivity, further noting however that this should be something to be aware of and to look out for.

Resolved (18/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the Association for Mathematics Research paper, as provided in the agenda papers.

3.2 UOW Cash Co-Investments for Grants

The DVCR&I shared a presentation regarding Research Block Grant (RGB) Income received from the Government. As a result of the proposed RGB reforms, currently out for consultation by the Government (see agenda item 3.4), the RGB income calculation is likely to change in order to boost incentives for industry research income. Modelling has suggested that these changes would result in reduced RGB funds to UOW due to our low Category 3 (Industry & Other) income.

The DVCR&I advised that moving forward, an agreed framework as to how the RGB will be allocated will be implemented. The DVCR&I further advised that a meeting has been held with ED's and ADRs to discuss a proposed UOW Cash Co-Investment Framework, including Major Research Initiatives and Salary Shortfall Contributions, and a number of Guiding Principles have already been agreed to. The incoming interim DVCR&I is also supportive of this approach. The Committee discussed the following:

- Institute/Centre Directors should be included in the approval process, as they should have some say in research strategy/staff investments - their role should be formalised, not ad-hoc;
- It is difficult to make decisions about the co-funding ratios of 1:4, 1:6 or 1:10 without data on the current ratios for successful grants, is this available?
- Is there a system that can be developed for interdisciplinary proposals to streamline approvals concurrently at Faculty level, as this can be time consuming for large proposals? The DRISO advised that the new Grants Management System will streamline this process;
- Should this process be less concerned with how much research income is generated from good research and more concerned with what the other benefits of good research are? Are we still going to be supporting fundamental research? The DVCR&I advised that fundamental research will always be supported, but RGB income depends on a formula that requires the university to obtain industry funding, hence the importance of increasing this;
- What are the consequences of directing the RSP to only grants/schemes where there is a requirement to provide a cash component, how will that look in terms of which research areas of the university are supported? Research outcomes also contribute to meeting other explicit strategic aspirations of UOW, making a difference, community engagement etc;
- AIIM strategy is to award a matching scholarship post award, as diluting the properly justified cash request with pre-award contributions is counterproductive, particularly

- matching HDRs; although other faculties suggested it as a positive and that providing a matching scholarship shows a commitment by the university to research training;
- At the ED and ADR meeting it was agreed that there would be no cash contributions for DPs, then faculties offered matching scholarships up front, noted as a cash contribution in the budget, this inconsistent approach causes a lot of frustration: although it was noted that there were differing recollections of that meeting, and that the agreement was to have further discussions with their AD-HDR about the inclusion of cash contributions;

Overall, the Committee was supportive of the proposed framework to provide a clear and consistent approach. The DVCR&I thanked the Committee for their feedback while noting that it is likely that not all comments and suggestions will be able to be supported. Discussions will continue with the incoming interim DVCR&I and an update will be provided at the next URC Meeting on 1 June.

Resolved (19/2022)

That the University Research Committee note the UOW Cash Co-Investments for Grants Update, as presented at the URC Meeting.

3.3 UOW ARC Academy

The Director, Research Services Office (DRSO) advised that the establishment of the UOW ARC Academy aims to improve the performance and drive growth in UOW's share of ARC competitive grant income. The DRSO further advised:

- Other UOW Researchers may nominate to be part of the ARC Academy;
- Training material and other resources will be provided with the assistance of PODS, for example, to help applicants improve their writing skills, ROPE etc;
- An NHMRC Academy will also be established, this is currently in development.

The Associate Director, Research Grants and Development advised that applicants should be supported early in the process, including concept discussions and mentoring. The Committee noted:

- This formalised approach is welcomed, and Academy Members should be respected for providing their valuable time;
- The Academy is not a substitute for faculty consultation and the culture of peer review should be maintained;
- EMCRs should be provided an opportunity to be part of the membership as it would be a great learning experience, and also good experience for professional staff in research management;
- Section 4 of the Terms of Reference states that the Academy will establish disciplinary sub-committees, although it was suggested that there are not enough members to fill a sub-committee in some disciplines so it is not possible for the sub-committee to be defined as disciplinary – suggest re-wording of this paragraph;
- Stage 3 of the Terms of Reference mentions Co-chairs, although there is only one Chair;
- Suggestion that Stage 4 Pitch Sessions could provide an award/incentive, for example funds that can be used for collaboration, however the DVCR&I noted that there are no funds available to provide a prize/incentive; and
- Provide clear communication of processes to ensure processes already occurring within faculties and those of the Academy are not duplicated.

The DRSO advised that an update will be provided at the next URC Meeting on 1 June.

Resolved (20/2022)

That the University Research Committee endorse the UOW ARC Academy Terms of Reference, subject to the changes as detailed, as provided in the agenda papers.

3.4 Government Consultations

Resolved (21/2022)

That the University Research Committee note recent Government Consultations, as provided in the agenda papers:

- *Government Research Block Grant Reform to Boost Incentives for Greater University and Industry Collaboration Consultation Paper; and*
- *ERA 2023 Benchmarking and Rating Scale Consultation Paper.*

PART 4 BUSINESS FROM UOW COMMITTEES

There was no Business from Other Committees

PART 5 FINAL BUSINESS

5.1 Next Meeting

The next University Research Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday 1 June 2022, 10.30am to 12.00pm.

The meeting closed at 11.00am.

ACTION ITEMS

- 3.2 J Martin/S Martin – review UOW Cash Co-Investment arrangements following feedback
All Committee Members – provide any further feedback
J Martin/S Martin – provide update at next URC Meeting
- 3.3 S Delfgou – review TOR following feedback
All Committee Members – provide any further feedback
S Delfgou – provide update at next URC Meeting
- 3.4 All Committee Members – provide any further feedback

Signed as a true record

Jennifer L. Martin
Jennifer L. Martin (Jun 8, 2022 10:08 GMT+10).....

Chairperson .../.../2022

1.3.2 Final URC Minutes 28 April 2022

Final Audit Report

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