



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES 29 JUNE 2023

Minutes of Meeting 03/2023 of the University Research Committee held on 29 June 2023 via Zoom.

Present:

Prof D Currow (*Chair*)

Prof S Akter
Prof M Batterham
Ms O Belhaffef
Prof K Clapham
Prof H Ecroyd
Prof P Innis
D/Prof S Kaye
Prof P Kelly

Prof L Kervin
S/Prof R Lewis
Ms S Martin
Prof S Moss
A/Prof G Peleckis
Mr M Perry
S/Prof M Randle
Prof N Reynolds

Prof C Ritz
D/Prof R Roberts
D/Prof S Robinson
Dr T Stutchbury
Mr G Tomka
Dr E Twyford
A/Prof S Wilkinson

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 Prof J Chen, Dr P Di Pietro, S/Prof P McGuirk, D/Prof A Sims, Prof W Vialle and Prof J Wang.

Ms Jan Sullivan, Manager, Academic Quality & Policy attended for item 3.4. Ms C Carter, Associate Director - Research Analytics, Systems & Support attended for item 3.5. Mr Craig Muller, Senior Manager Enterprise Service and Core Infrastructure attended for item 3.10.

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, 1.5, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.9 and 3.10 were starred for the meeting.

Resolved (20/2023)

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

1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved (21/2023)

That the minutes of the previous Meetings 01/2023 held on 9 March 2023 and 02/2023 held on 11 May 2023, as provided in the agenda papers, be confirmed and signed as a true record.

1.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

No Business Arising

1.5 Chair's Business

New Appointments/Movements/Awards

Professor Theo Farrell, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Student Life) will be leaving UOW to take up the position of Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University from early 2024.

The DVCRSF farewelled S/Professor Melanie Randle from the Research and Sustainable Futures Portfolio, expressing thanks for her outstanding contributions and leadership, further noting that the portfolio is much stronger because of her two years in the role. S/Prof Randle is stepping down as Dean, Researcher Development and Integrity to return to the Faculty of Business and Law to focus on her research. The vacant role will be advertised internally soon.

Recruitment for the Pro Vice-Chancellor (University Impact) role is complete with an offer to the preferred candidate made in the last few days. Recruitment for the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Strategy) is currently being finalised, with the selected candidate expected to start on 1 October. Professor Brendan Lyon joined UOW as the first Professor of Practice in the Faculty of Business and Law in May.

The DVCRSF congratulated D/Professor Sharon Robinson on her Member of the Order of Australia Award, announced in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours List. The DVCRSF noted that the Award, received for contributions to the field of science and particularly the study of Antarctic Climate Change, is richly deserved and an outstanding achievement. Committee Members congratulated Prof Robinson, further highlighting her generosity, service, leadership and mentorship, especially for women in science, both locally and globally.

Rankings

The 2024 QS World University Rankings released overnight saw UOW place 162nd in the world and 12th in Australia. One of the highlights was an outstanding performance in the research citations per faculty category, where UOW ranked 60th globally.

NSW DVCR's Meeting

The DVCRSF advised that a major topic of discussion at the June DVCR's meeting was the NSW Government budget review of a significant number of research funding programs. NSW universities are strongly lobbying the Government, although it looks like there may be difficult times ahead with several funding schemes under threat. Also concerning is the potential loss of federal research funding that is at risk without the leverage of state funding.

URC Research Workshop

The DVCRSF thanked all those that attended the Research Workshop in May. As a result of the workshop, it was noted that future university research efforts will need to be focused and prioritised. Such investments must continue to encompass basic research through to how we translate and maximise the impact of findings to solve complex, wicked challenges.

The workshop outcomes will inform concurrent work being undertaken on the new Global Challenges themes and key research questions; and work being undertaken by the Strategy Division to identify and incorporate key research themes into Faculty Plans, based on areas of disciplinary strength, which can also feed into Challenge questions. Cross-cutting themes identified will be explored as key questions within each Challenge.

Research Entities Framework Review

The all-staff consultation phase for the Research Entities Framework Policy closed on 28 June. Any outstanding feedback should be provided as soon as possible. Further discussion at Item 3.5.

Research Block Grant Distribution Model

A Working Group has been established to undertake this review. The review will:

- Define the performance-based formula for allocation of RSP and RTP funds;
- Determine the model for annual distribution of research support funding to Faculties; and
- Develop a new UOW Policy governing RBG allocation and distribution.

The first meeting of the Working Group has been held and guiding principles are currently being developed for the new RBG model, which will be circulated for initial consultation with targeted key stakeholders in the next few weeks. Membership of the Working Group will also be extended to include an Associate Dean Research and an Associate Dean HDR.

Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Research Excellence

Award outcomes will be announced by the Vice-Chancellor in the week beginning 3 July. The DVCRSF advised that there was not a lot of interest in the Research Team Award this year and it is an opportune time to think about reviewing the awards. Initial feedback from the Committee was that the information required and amount of time it takes to put together the team awards is not worth the outcome and recognition. The DVCRSF welcomed further feedback.

Research Fellows Breakfast

The DVCRSF will be hosting a breakfast in late July to celebrate the achievements of the current cohort of competitively funded Research Fellows. The Vice-Chancellor will be in attendance, and it is hoped that this will be an annual event.

PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

There was no Confidential Business

PART 3 GENERAL BUSINESS

3.1 Research and Innovation Report

Resolved (22/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the Research and Innovation Report for the June 2023 URC Meeting, as provided in the agenda papers.

3.2 Graduate Research Update

The Dean of Graduate Research (DGR) updated the Committee on the Annual Progress Reports (APR's). Significant changes include that both the candidate and supervisor are now able to update their reports confidentially, and updates to the questions asked in the APR.

A new HDR subcommittee has been formed - the HDR Collaborative Arrangements Committee - which will oversee MOU's, internships, joint PhD's and industry partnerships. The Committee has compiled a handbook to guide these processes. The DGR confirmed that this Committee could also include governance and compliance of overseas PhD or Masters students coming to UOW. The Committee suggested that discussion with Global Enterprises may provide synergies in this area.

The Graduate Research Committee is currently in the process of reviewing and updating all HDR Policies, followed by an update of the HDR Rules. Committee Members are invited to reach out if they have questions or input, however a feedback process will also be undertaken as part of the Policy Updates.

Resolved (23/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the Graduate Research Update, as provided in the agenda papers and presented by the Dean of Graduate Research, at the URC Meeting.

3.3 Associate Deans (Research) Update

The ADR BAL advised several internal grant funding schemes are open, a new Research Mentorship Program has commenced, and a new collaboration with UOWD has been established. Congratulations to ANCORS and D/Professor Stuart Kaye on the recent grant success of over \$2 million from DFAT.

The ADR AIIM congratulated D/Professor Gerhard Swiegers on his successful ARC Laureate Fellowship, also extending thanks to the Research Services Office for their wonderful work in getting this project up and running so quickly. The AIIM ADR asked the Director RSO to pass on their appreciation and thanks to the Research Grants and Development Team.

The ADR SMAH passed on congratulations to D/Professor Sharon Robinson on her Order of Australia Award. Congratulations were also extended to A/Professor Shane Ellis and team on the successful \$US2.8 million grant from the US National Institute of Health & Ageing. In addition, Professor Justin Yerbury's book "Fighting Fate" was recently launched and the SMAH ADR acknowledged and congratulated Prof Yerbury on the incredible, emotional and inspiring story of his journey with Motor Neurone Disease and the research that has been done here at UOW into the treatment and understanding of MND.

The ADR ASSH congratulated D/Professor Sharon Robinson on her Order of Australia Award and thanked S/Professor Melanie Randle for her contribution as Dean, Researcher Development and Integrity. The ASSH ADR further acknowledged and expressed thanks to Karen Lovasz, Manager, RSO Strategic Projects on the great work on the Research Entities Framework, in addition to leading several other projects.

The EIS ADR acknowledged successful grant applications not already noted in the ADR Report: an Australian/Indonesian Government Grant and ARC Linkage Grant.

Resolved (24/2023)

That that the University Research Committee note the Associate Deans (Research) Update, as provided in the agenda papers, and presented by the Associate Deans (Research), at the URC Meeting.

3.4 TEQSA Re-Registration Update and Compliance Assessment

The Manager, Academic Quality & Policy joined the meeting, noting that this item will be a standing item on all UOW Committees, and advised:

- UOW must apply for registration as a higher education provider by September 2024 for assessment against the core standards of the Higher Education Standards Framework;
- Assessment on additional standards based on UOW's risk profile will also take place, although what the additional standards will be will not be advised until early in 2024 (noting that the last additional assessment was against the Research Training Standards);
- An external review of academic and corporate governance processes is also required as part of re-registration;
- An initial assessment against the Research and Research Training Standards has already been undertaken as detailed in the agenda paper, with further feedback from the Committee welcomed;
- The initial assessment found that UOW is fully compliant in 15 of the 25 standards; and
- The Committee should consider a compliance assessment against the Standards be reported to the URC annually.

The Committee noted that TEQSA is now more risk based and would look favourably if UOW were to implement an annual compliance review against the standards. The DVCRSF supported this and advised that plans would need to be devised as to how this will be implemented.

Resolved (25/2023)

That the University Research Committee:

- (i) note the TEQSA Re-registration Update and Preliminary Compliance Assessment: Research and Research Training Standards, as provided in the agenda papers and as presented by the Manager, Academic Quality & Policy, at the URC Meeting; and*
- (ii) be provided with an annual report on UOW compliance with the Research & Research Training Standards.*

3.5 UOW Research Entities Framework Review Update

The Manager, RSO Strategic Projects joined the meeting and provided an update, noting:

- Targeted consultation has been held which resulted in significant enhancements (as detailed in the agenda papers);
- Open consultation is now closed and is currently being assessed, with a report to be provided to the DVCRSF in the next week;
- Initial review of the feedback noted some common concerns relating to the transition period and how it would affect staff, interdisciplinary research, unrestricted income, maintaining names, primary membership, and the review cycle.

Following this meeting, the refined and finalised Research Entities Framework will be forwarded to Academic Senate for endorsement, then to Council for approval. An Implementation Working Group will be established to develop an implementation plan and supporting procedures, with a transition period commencing on 1 January 2024.

The DVCRSF noted the importance of Entities having a strong succession plan. The DVCRSF further extended his thanks to the Manager, RSO Strategic Projects for the great work in progressing this Review and to URC Members for their input.

Resolved (26/2023)

That the University Research Committee:

- (i) note the Research Entities Framework Policy Consultation Paper, including the revised Draft UOW Research Entities Framework Policy, and the updated implementation timeline, as provided in the agenda papers; and*
- (ii) forward the draft UOW Research Entities Framework Policy (including changes made as a result of consultation) to Academic Senate for endorsement, prior to final approval from the delegated authority.*

3.6 Review of Code of Practice – Responsible Conduct of Research

Resolved (27/2023)

That the University Research Committee:

- (i) endorse the minor amendments to the Code of Practice – Responsible Conduct of Research as provided in the agenda papers; and*
- (ii) forward to Academic Senate for feedback and further endorsement, prior to final approval from the Vice-Chancellor as the delegated authority.*

3.7 Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Research Code - Policy and Procedure Review

The Dean, Researcher Development and Integrity (Dean, RDI) advised that a Working Group was established in 2019 for this review. Progress was delayed by COVID-19 and resumed in 2022 with the appointment of a Project Officer to complete the review process.

The proposed changes will bring the policy and procedure into alignment with current practice, associated institutional policy, and re-aligns them with national research policy including:

- NHMRC research integrity policy and guides, in particular:

- the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018; and
- the Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018;
- the Higher Education Standards Framework [and TEQSA] Standards: 4.1 Research; 4.2 Research Training; 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity; 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability.

The Dean RDI further advised that following initial consultation and the incorporation of feedback already received, the Research Integrity Committee (RIC), at its meeting in February 2023, endorsed the amendments. The URC is now requested to endorse the reviewed Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Research Code Policy and the new Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Research Code Procedure for targeted consultation with Academic Senate and feedback from the wider University community.

A Committee Member expressed several concerns. The first concern is that there is no specified timeframe around investigations and the documents provide no clarity as to how long an investigation would go for. The Dean RDI advised that this is in line with NHMRC requirements and that there is no timeframe because there are external factors and complexities that cannot be controlled. The Dean RDI agreed in principle that a set timeframe would be beneficial, and noted that existing internal processes do have deadlines, however as external processes are not controlled, and providing a deadline may give false expectations. The Dean RDI noted this concern and advised that the issue would be discussed further.

The second concern relates to the line management of an individual involved in an investigation and confidentiality around the process. Whilst confidentiality is understandable, from a risk perspective there may need to be some adjustments or process changes to mitigate any further risks, to protect those involved and put the relevant protections in place (for example a support person). The Dean RDI advised that the documents would be adjusted/reworded to remedy this.

The third concern is minor, page 148 of the Agenda, section 4.14 of the Procedure: *'If at any point it becomes apparent that a complaint about a breach of the Code is frivolous, misconceived or otherwise lacking in substance, the process may stop.'* The suggestion is that this phrase is vague and should be reworded to say *'the process should stop.'* The Dean RDI advised that there may be other aspects of the investigation that need to be considered, so the term 'may stop' would be appropriate, however it was then suggested that this be clarified to describe the instances in which the process 'may stop.'

Resolved (28/2023)

That the University Research Committee:

- (i) *endorse the rescission of the Research Misconduct and Complaints Management Procedure;*
- (ii) *endorse the major amendments to the Research Integrity and Conduct Policy: Breaches, Concerns and Complaints – now titled Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Research Code Policy;*
- (iii) *endorse the new Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Research Code Procedure replacing the rescinded document; and*
- (iv) *forward to Academic Senate for feedback and further endorsement, prior to final approval from the delegated authority.*

3.8 UOW Data and Decision Science Initiative

Resolved (29/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the UOW Data and Decision Science Initiative Update, as provided in the agenda papers.

3.9 Early Career Researcher (ECR) Survey Update

The Chair EC-DC addressed the Committee about the recent ECR Survey noting that this is the third ECR Survey following the commencement of the EC-DC. The summary infographic of results is provided in the agenda papers, however more detailed responses about funding schemes has also been collected and is available. The EC-DC has made the following recommendations:

- Continue to emphasise access to internal funding schemes for ECRs;
- Monitor, review and tangibly minimise impacts of disruptions on equity, diversity and inclusion;
- Actively reduce the administrative burden on staff; and
- Implement stronger employment pathways.

The DVCRSF asked URC Members to reach out directly to the Chair, EC-DC if they have any questions or require further information.

Resolved (30/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the results of the ECR Survey, as provided in the agenda papers and presented by the Chair EC-DC, at the URC Meeting.

3.10 UOW Cloudstor Update

The Senior Manager Enterprise Service and Core Infrastructure (IMTS) joined the meeting to provide an update, following the decision by Cloudstor to decommission the system from December 2023, causing significant impact for UOW.

Both Microsoft and AWS provided options as a replacement to Cloudstor, with one option, AWS WorkDocs, being selected as the most appropriate. Following further discussion, the vendor AWS then advised that they are unable to meet UOW's required timeframe or provide a delivery date and as a result this solution has been deemed too high risk to implement. Microsoft OneDrive, SharePoint Online and Teams has now been selected as UOW's replacement for CloudStor. Further information was provided to the Committee, noting also that the priority now is moving research data to the new system.

Committee Members are asked to reach out directly to the Senior Manager Enterprise Service and Core Infrastructure if they have any questions.

Resolved (31/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the UOW CloudStor Update as presented by the Senior Manager Enterprise Service and Core Infrastructure, at the URC Meeting

PART 4 BUSINESS FROM UOW COMMITTEES

4.1 Research Integrity Committee (RIC)

Resolved (32/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 10 February 2023 Meeting of the Research Integrity Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.2 Graduate Research Committee (GRC)

Resolved (33/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 2 March 2023 Meeting of the Graduate Research Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.3 Research IT and Systems Committee (RITAS)

Resolved (34/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 14 February 2023 Meeting of the Research IT and Systems Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.4 Early Career Disruption Committee (EC-DC)

Resolved (35/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the summary for the October 2022 to June 2023 Meetings of the Early Career Disruption Committee, as provided in the agenda papers.

4.5 Research Infrastructure Advisory Group (RIAG)

Resolved (36/2023)

That the University Research Committee note the minutes of the 22 February 2023 Meeting of the Research Infrastructure Advisory Group, as provided in the agenda papers.

PART 5 FINAL BUSINESS

5.1 Other Business

No other business

5.2 Next Meeting

The next University Research Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday 30 August 2023.

The meeting closed at 11am.

ACTION ITEMS

- 1.3 J Evans – file URC Minutes for 01/2023 and 02/2023
- 1.5 All Committee Members - provide feedback to the DVCRSF (VC's Awards) as detailed
- 3.2 All Committee Members - provide feedback to the DGR as detailed
- 3.4 D Currow/S Martin - implement an annual compliance review
- 3.5 K Lovasz - forward to Governance for August Academic Senate Agenda
- 3.6 R Perkiss – forward to Governance for September Academic Senate Agenda
- 3.7 R Perkiss – forward to Governance for August Academic Senate Agenda
- 3.9 All Committee Members - provide feedback as detailed
- 3.10 All Committee Members - provide feedback as detailed
- 4.1 R Perkiss – file RIC Minutes
- 4.2 J Barrie – file GRC Minutes
- 4.3 M Oakman – file RITAS Minutes
- 4.4 L Sherwood – file EC-DC Summaries
- 4.5 M Glancy – file RIAG Minutes

Signed as a true record



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Chairperson 30/8./2023