

## Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

The 70<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee of the Scottish Funding Council was held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019 in Carnegie Room, Apex 1, 99 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD.

- Present:** Professor Lesley Yellowlees (Chair)  
Professor Anne Anderson  
Professor Tim Bedford  
Dr Caroline Cantley  
Professor Susan Craw  
Dr Alicia Greated  
Dr Jano van Hemert  
Dr Siobhan Jordan  
Mhairi Harrington  
Douglas Mundie  
Professor Andy Porter  
Professor Wayne Powell  
Professor Jonathan Seckl
- Observers** Helen Cross, UKRI  
Laura Dougan, SG  
Dr Pieter van de Graaf, SG  
Alison Munro, SE
- Guests:** Professor Louise Heathwaite, University of Lancaster
- Officers:** Morag Campbell, Dr Stuart Fancey, Jenny Jamieson, Sarah Kirkpatrick, Robin Lee, Keith McDonald, Hazel McGraw, Maxine O'Neill, Morven Pritchard, Andrew Youngson
- Apologies:** Morven Cameron, HIE  
Professor Tom Inns  
Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli  
Carolyn Reeve, BEIS

**Chair's business**

The Chair welcomed members to the 70<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. In addition, the Chair welcomed Laura Dougan from Scottish Government who would be attending with Pieter van de Graaf as an observer. The Chair also welcomed Professor Louise Heathwaite to the Committee to present her final report on research pooling.

The Chair provided members with updates on committee membership. Professor Tom Inns and Professor Susan Craw would leave the Committee on 31 October 2019 due to end of term. The Chair thanked both members for their contributions. Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli's term on the SFC Board would come to an end on 31 October and therefore he would also no longer be a member of the Committee.

The recruitment process was currently underway for new members. To ensure the Committee remained quorate, Professor Bedford and Dr Jordan had agreed to extend their membership for one month beyond their end of term on 31 August 2019 and attend today's meeting. The Chair thanked both members for their additional time and contribution.

The Chair noted two changes relating to committee members. Professor Anne Anderson had retired from University of Glasgow and Dr Alicia Greated had moved jobs to become CEO of Knowledge Transfer Network. Both members were invited by the Chair to remain on the Committee and both members accepted.

Dr Jano van Hemert had accepted the Chair's invitation to serve a second term from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

**Director's update**

The Director highlighted the published Scottish Government's Programme for Government and its commitment to climate change action and Net Zero 2025. SFC had issued a call for proposals for the Climate Emergency Collaboration Challenge. This was the first of its kind to be issued from Research & Innovation Directorate.

The Director noted the following:

- The Researcher Career Concordat would be published on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019.
- The Director was an observer on UKRI's Working Group on Open Access.
- SFC hosted a meeting with the Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales and representatives from the Welsh Government who had been impressed with SFC's successful collaboration nationally and across the sector.

**19/29 Minutes of previous meeting 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (RKEC/19/min2)**

The minute from the previous meeting was approved.

**19/30 Post-Brexit environment: update on current position (Oral)**

Sarah Kirkpatrick provided an update to the Committee on Brexit with a focus on the longer term strategy for research post-Brexit and considerations around business continuity in a no-deal scenario.

**19/31 Open access: update (Oral)**

The Director updated the Committee on developments on Open Access. The Working Group on Open Access would come back to the Committee with their recommendations before going to Council.

**19/32 Evaluation of Research Pooling Programme (RKEC/19/15)  
Presentation of final report (prior to publication)**

The Committee welcomed Professor Louise Heathwaite who presented the final report of the independent review of SFC's research pooling initiative. The following points were made:

- The Chair thanked all those involved in the production of the report.
- The final report will serve many functions including providing an evidence base for further developments.
- A key message coming out of the report was that SFC needed to further capitalise on the research pooling to transform the initiative into a longer term investment
- Original intentions for the initiative were built around a research landscape that is very different now compared to when research pooling started. Does it now require a different approach?
- Research pools will appeal to stakeholders working within the national performance framework and as a result, SFC's approach

should be strategic and engaged. A Team Scotland approach would require a new cultural approach.

- Transitional pools must be fit for purpose, well defined with robust governance that is strategically focussed
- Blue sky thinking within pooling should be supported and fostered to produce real transformation

The Chair thanked all those involved in the production of the pooling report.

The Committee fully supported the report and its recommendations. However it would be important for the Committee to fully debate the report following this presentation. In order to do this, members agreed that it would be necessary to meet again in November for this purpose. The Clerk would arrange this extra meeting.

#### **19/33 Subject Weights Review (RKEC/19/16)**

Morag Campbell introduced this paper to the Committee that presented the findings and recommendations of the Working Group formed by RKEC to review the subject weighting for six units of assessment.

The Committee noted that the recommendations constituted good advice to the Board and noted the following points:

- The recommendations will not impact the amount of REG funding
- Financial implications should be considered on an ongoing basis
- Units of Assessment do not sit in isolation and there will be other implications that come out of the review

#### **19/34 Research Integrity (RKEC/19/17)**

The Director introduced this paper that invited the Committee to discuss the establishment of UKRI's Research Integrity Committee and the implication for Scottish HEIs, and recommend an approach for engagement with this new Committee.

The Committee acknowledged the challenges of engaging with the UKRI Research Integrity Committee from a devolutionary perspective, particularly as the research community in Scotland were subject to different mechanisms for investigations. However, there would be

scope to ensure that Scottish HEI's were viewed within a Scottish context whilst preserving a consistent approach. The Committee made the following observations:

- UKRI should take a balanced approach but aim to report everything
- How the procedure will apply to those HEIs not funded by UKRI should be considered
- The Concordat could influence what a common standard is.

#### **19/35 Innovation Centres (RKEC/19/18)**

Keith McDonald provided the Committee with an update on the Innovation Centre Programme. The Council would be asked to discuss and endorse the IC Programme Strategy for 2019/24 at their meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The Committee made the following points

- The successful progress of the strategy will largely depend on the Innovation Centres and how they interact with their external environment
- The Innovation Centres should consider ambition and impact over the longer term and the strategy should allow for this
- The strategy should support and promote full collaboration across all relevant stakeholders and partners
- There were no metrics within the strategy but there is a framework and indicators of progress within it

#### **19/36 University Innovation Fund Review (RKEC/19/19)**

Keith McDonald introduced this paper that provided an update on progress with the SFC-led review of the University Innovation Fund (UIF). The Review Group was due to consult more widely on a preferred funding model in January 2020.

Douglas Mundie thanked the UIF Review Group for their work to date. The Committee noted the following:

- It would be important to consider all reports in the round (for example the Muscatelli report/Louise Heathwaite's Pooling review) and not any one report in isolation so that key developments can be taken into account

- Outputs and purpose must be clear and any resulting collaboration meaningful
- The fund is highly valued by the sector and has produced demonstrable impact

**19/37 College Innovation update (Oral)**

Andrew Youngson provided the Committee with an update on progress made on college innovation.

A Call for Proposals for the College Innovation Fund had been issued in July 2019 with a deadline of 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019. A panel was scheduled to meet on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 to sift through the applications.

The Committee acknowledged the link between the innovation landscape and college innovation with potential alignment across all players.

**19/38 Forward agenda (RKEC/19/20)**

The Chair and the Committee noted the forward agenda.

The Committee agreed to build themes into the December agenda with the November meeting focussing on the Research Pooling Initiative Review.

**19/39 AOCB**

There was no other business.

**Future meetings**

November 2019\* to be arranged  
19<sup>th</sup> December 2019