

<p>Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru Higher Education Funding Council for Wales</p> 	<p>Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee</p> <p>Disclosable</p>
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Unconfirmed notes of the meeting of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee held on 15 October 2015 at the HEFCW offices, Cardiff

Present

Members Professor Robin Williams (Chair)

Nick Bodycombe – Chair, Welsh Higher Education European Liaison Officers (WHEELOs)

Dr Rachel Bowen – Federation of Small Businesses Wales

Professor Steve Gill - Cardiff Metropolitan University

Professor Hilary Lappin-Scott - Swansea University

Chris Meadows – Business representative, IQE plc

Alexandra Saxon – Research Councils UK

Professor David Shepherd – Bangor University

Professor Mark E Smith - representing HEFCW Council

Matthew Taylor – Chair, Wales Industrial Liaison Officers Network (WILOs)

Professor Hywel Thomas – Universities Wales nominee

Dr Colin Wyatt – representing HEFCW Council

Observers Professor David Langley – Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales

Dr Carolyn Reeve, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Amanda Wilkinson – Universities Wales

Officers Jackie Cresswell-Griffith – Head of Skills and Employability

Bethan Owen – Director of Institutional Engagement

Dr Tove Oliver – Senior European and International Manager/
Secretary to RIEC

Dr Alyson Thomas – Head of Research, Innovation & Engagement

Linda Tiller – Senior Research Manager

Apologies Professor Nigel Scollan – Aberystwyth University

Professor Stephen Tomlinson – representing HEFCW Council

Phil Allen - Welsh Government (DEST)

Sue Morgan – Welsh Government (DEST)

1 Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed the following to their first meeting of the Committee:

- Dr Colin Wyatt - Council member
- Professor Hywel Thomas (PVC Research, Innovation and Enterprise, Cardiff University) – Universities Wales nominee
- Professor Steve Gill (Associate Dean, Research, Cardiff School of Art and Design, and Professor of Interactive Design) – Academic Researcher
- Matthew Taylor (Director of Enterprise, Cardiff Met University) – WILOs Chair

1.2 The Chair also formally welcomed Dr Rachel Bowen (Policy Manager, Federation of Small Businesses Wales) - representative of the small business sector. He welcomed back Nick Bodycombe (Manager, European Office, Cardiff University) - WHEELOs Chair, and thanked David Shepherd for agreeing to continue on the Committee in his new capacity of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Bangor University.

2 Notes of the Meeting held on 10 February 2015

The notes of the meeting held on 10 February were accepted as a true record.

3 Matters Arising

a) *HEFCW's draft response to the Diamond Review*

3.1 Alyson Thomas reported that the Committee's comments had been incorporated into the finalised version of HEFCW's response to the Diamond Review, which was submitted to the Review in February. A summary of all of the evidence submitted to the Review will be published this autumn. The full report and recommendations will be published in September 2016.

b) *Outcomes of 2014 Research Excellence Framework*

3.2 The Chair requested that the discussion with Phil Allen on how the next A4B programme might support the REF impact agenda be kept alive and brought back to the Committee at a later date.

Communication from the Chair - Recent Research Developments

Although not formally included as an agenda item, the Chair updated the Committee on recent research developments as follows:

- HEFCE has announced that, at the request of BIS, the consultation on the development of the next REF has been delayed pending completion of the UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).
- There is also a lot of speculation about possible outcomes of the McKinsey Review of BIS-sponsored bodies.

Carolyn Reeve (BIS) confirmed that there would be a short delay in the consultation and that the UK government recognised the value of the REF and its predecessors and was committed to the dual support system for research. As a part of the spending review, BIS and its partner organisations would be looking to a saving of between 25-40%.

Alex Saxon (RCUK) updated the Committee on the Nurse Review and RCUK's own CSR preparations. The Chancellor will announce outcomes of the CSR on 25 November, and there will be further discussions to determine allocations to specific budgets.

Members highlighted the need for sensitivity in respect of devolution and the future of REF, and the detrimental impact to the sector of well-connected staff leaving RCUK.

4 Research Collaborations: What have we learnt?

- 4.1 The Chair reported that HEFCW had supported a number of projects via its Reconfiguration and Collaboration programme and that the paper provides a summary of evaluations undertaken to date and provides some initial conclusions about success factors for research collaborations.
- 4.2 The Committee discussed the paper's conclusions, and identified a number of success factors, including in particular: the people involved (including strong leadership and buy-in from senior management); building on existing strengths; clarity of objectives and having a common goal; and having adequate resources in place and sufficient time. The external funding and political environments also had a bearing whether collaborations were successful. In the business sector innovation and collaboration seems to be a present priority, including with universities.
- 4.3 It was agreed that there was currently no need to develop this paper further, but that there is a need to focus on how we can strengthen the potential for good research collaborations in the future. It was recognised that collaborations that have a bearing on research operate at many different levels. It will be important for expertise and successes in this area to be promoted, including to the Welsh Government's Innovation Advisory Council, and internationally. HEFCW should consider the convening of a forum, or using this meeting as a forum, to show how successful universities (e.g. in France, Germany and USA) are organising themselves structurally to maximise their collaborative potential.

Action

HEFCW to consider the Committee's suggestions for future activity in this area

5 Research Indicators for monitoring

- 5.1 Linda Tiller introduced the paper which outlines proposals for a basket of research indicators to provide HEFCW with a rounded picture of the sector's research activities on an ongoing basis, including some bibliometric data. The indicators which HEFCW uses on an annual basis to monitor the sector's research performance have, to date, focused largely on research grant income.
- 5.2 The Committee discussed the proposed indicators and also the rationale for them, which includes highlighting successes and being aware of weaknesses. Concerns were expressed about the potential burden that an enhanced range

of indicators could put universities in terms of additional data collection. However, it was pointed out that much of the data are already collected and in the public domain.

- 5.3 Members recognised that information on the impact of research is important for political and funding purposes. Collaboration was also highlighted as a good example of a research indicator.
- 5.4 It was agreed that further thought will be given to the purpose of the enhanced basket of indicators and how the data will be used, including possible Freedom of Information implications. This discussion will begin with the UnisWales PVC Research Network.

Action

HEFCW to consult further with the sector on the proposed collection and report these outcomes to RIEC

6 EU R&I grant capture by universities in Wales

- 6.1 Tove Oliver introduced the paper which presents provisional statistics on grant capture by universities in Wales in 2014 and 2015 from two key EU R&I funding programmes: Horizon 2020 (H2020) and European Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF). It also outlines HEFCW's role and existing support for academics in Wales for accessing these new EU programmes. The paper was felt by members to be timely (given the NAW's Enterprise & Business Committee's impending scrutiny session on H2020) and that it is an accurate reflection of the status quo, drawn from a range of sources.
- 6.2 The Committee discussed the successes of the sector in the new EU programmes. The positive performances of the Scottish and Irish sectors in H2020 were also discussed. Members noted that the profile of the Scottish sector is quite different to that in Wales, which has fewer and smaller research intensive universities. It was also acknowledged that Ireland had devised an ambitious strategy for engagement with H2020 at an early stage. The importance of having pre-existing networks involving industry was emphasised. Concerns were expressed about the limited availability to the sector of data on early calls and on Welsh participation in Horizon 2020.
- 6.3 The importance of universities accessing EU R&I funds was emphasised, especially given the impending cuts in national research budgets. The value of ESIF and the need for the Welsh Government to release this to the sector as soon as possible was emphasised. This would put universities in a stronger position to access H2020 funding. Research grant income is an indicator in Strategic Objective 1.1 of the R&I Priority of the ERDF programme.

Action

HEFCW to:

- ***immediately report outcomes from this meeting to WHEB for inclusion in their evidence for the NAW E&BC scrutiny session***

- *present this paper with the Committee's comments to its November Council*
- *update members on developments in sector participation when H2020 data is available for 2015 calls (October 2016 meeting)*
- *David Langley and the Chair to advise CSA of the sector's successes in EU R&I grant capture and on the importance of ESIF being released to the sector as soon as possible*

7 Evaluation of innovation and engagement activity

- 7.1 Alyson Thomas introduced the paper which presents some initial ideas on commissioning an evaluation of innovation and engagement (I&E) activity across the sector in Wales, including making use of material which the National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) can provide.
- 7.2 The Committee considered the proposals in the paper including whether or not it would be appropriate to undertake some form of independent evaluation of I&E activity. Members were concerned about the extra burden to universities that such an evaluation might present (in the absence of any additional funding). In terms of the list of evidence on I&E activity in para 10.1 and other sources that could be drawn from, it was noted that WEFO represents a significant funder of I&E in Wales and that it would be important to ensure that the outputs from this activity are captured.
- 7.3 The Committee agreed that, provided the NCUB Collaboration Progress Monitor could give a tailored version of the data for Wales under the terms of HEFCW's current funding arrangements with NCUB, and that it did not have any additional resource implications for the sector, then it would be helpful to proceed.
- 7.4 It was agreed that, given the current level of uncertainty in terms of funding, at this time HEFCW should not proceed with an independent evaluation to provide a fuller contextual picture of I&E activity in Wales.

Action

HEFCW to consider how it might capture and present HE-related outputs from previous WEFO programmes, to add to the picture of innovation and engagement activity across Wales

HEFCW to progress with NCUB a 'Wales cut' of the NCUB Collaboration Progress Monitor

8 Distribution of Investment in UK Research Base

- 8.1 Linda Tiller introduced the paper which presented information about the geographical distribution of investments announced in the BIS Science and Innovation Strategy, *Our Plan for Growth*, together with some related material about patterns of RCUK grant funding. The paper had been provided because

it had been noted at the previous meeting of the Committee that many of the investments announced in *Our Plan for Growth* were England-only, and it had been agreed that this aspect of the document should be examined in more detail.

- 8.2 Mark Smith commented that the main concern was the knock-on effect that such investments would have in the future, in terms of increasing research capacity in other parts of the UK.
- 8.3 It was noted that investment follows quality. However, it was considered that Wales has some outstanding areas of research which are not being fully recognised, and it is important to ensure that such strengths are publicised more widely so that UK politicians are aware of them.
- 8.4 It was suggested that when the UK Government makes major research investments there should be consultation on the most appropriate geographical location. It was pointed out that BIS had undertaken a consultation on priorities for capital research investment in 2014, and had sought inputs from across the UK.
- 8.5 Carolyn Reeve commented that BIS recognises the importance of place in research, and that was this theme featured strongly in Jo Johnson's recent speech on *One Nation Science*. BIS is about to invite consortia of universities, businesses and LEPS/devolved administrations to undertake Science and Innovation Audits which will identify regional strengths and possibly guide future investment. Bids will be invited from across the UK, and consortia will need to be self-selecting and identify their own strengths. Selection criteria will be based on research capability and emerging strengths.
- 8.6 It was noted that Welsh Government will be leading on this in Wales. The Committee identified coastal seas and semi-conductor work as particular areas of strength that might be highlighted in any audit for Wales.

Action

Chair to update CSA on opportunities arising from the Science and Innovation Audits and to consider whether any further action is required from HEFCW.

9 Draft Annual Report of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee to Council 2014/15

- 9.1 The Committee approved its draft annual report for 2014/15 for submission to the Council.

10 Research Income of universities in Wales 2013/14

- 10.1 The Committee received for information a paper on Research Income of universities in Wales 2013/14.

11 International PGR Student Data

11.1 The Committee received for information a paper on International PGR Student Data.

12 Higher Education – Business and Community Interaction survey 2013-14

12.1 The Committee received for information a paper on the Higher Education – Business and Community Interaction survey 2013-14.

13 National Centre for Universities and Business: update

13.1 The Committee received for information a paper on the National Centre for Universities and Business: update.

14 Minutes of the Meeting of SETQC held on 3 February and 8 July 2015

14.1 The Committee received for information the minutes of the Minutes of the Meeting of SETQC held on 3 February and 8 July 2015. These will be the final minutes of the SETQC Committee.

15 Any Other Business

15.1 No other business was raised

16 Dates of Future Meetings

16.1 The next meetings of the Committee will be held on:

- Wednesday 13th April 2016
- Thursday 20th October 2016