GCU
Glasgow Caledonian
University

Department of Governance

GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY	
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE	
Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2019	
Present:	Mr M. Anderson, Professor K. Currie, Professor R. Emmanuel, Professor L. Elliot, Dr L. Gray, Professor J. Harris, Professor B. Hughes, Dr D. Lukic, Professor O. Pahl, Professor B. Steves, Dr J. Thomson, Professor J. Woodburn (Acting Chair)
In attendance:	Ms M. Daly, Mr G. Steele, Mr P Woods (Secretary)
Apologies:	Professor C. Donaldson, Ms D. Donaldson,
MINUTES	

019.024	**Considered**	The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2019 (**REC19/06/01**).
019.025	**Resolved**	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Criteria for Allocation of Open Access Funding (arising on 019.012)

019.026	**Reported**	By Mr Steele that the working group had met again and that a number of actions had been agreed i.e. that the Library will create a webpage, there would be further discussion on open access policy and the development of a publication plan. The intention was to keep this on the URC agenda and create wider awareness generally of Plan S.

REF 2021

019.028	**Considered**	A timeline for the Mock REF and return of Survey of Submission Intentions (**REC19-07-01**)
019.029	**Reported**	By Mr Anderson that the schedule set out short to medium term preparations for REF. The REF 2021 Code of Practice was now approved by the SFC and a provisional sigres list was completed. The schedule for the mock REF was attached with some caveats to take account of any minor delays.

		A key element of the preparations was communication, and in particular the need to publicise implications and meaning of *sigres.* The Town Hall event in November was an opportunity to inform the University community and allow for questions. Environment data uploads to Pure were expected to be completed during November. A peer review process by UoA Leads would be expected to be completed by mid-December and it was intended to harmonise UoA level and University level environment statements in the challenge meetings before their upload in mid-December. The intention was broadly to take up to Christmas preparing the mock and to review the outcome in the new year. It gave the University the opportunity to test its REF-related systems and give a better idea of UoA quality. Outside of mock, more general REF preparations were listed, including the ongoing schedule of challenge meetings and impact group meetings.
019.030	**Discussion**	One member asked about scope for adding a staff member to the sigres list. Mr Anderson stated that there may be scope but it needs to be made clear that the sigres definition is about employment expectation and not a matter for selection at UoA level. Any discussions of this nature should be addressed to him in the first instance. However he added that he expected there would be some changes to the sigres list between the mock and the final submission.
019.031	**Resolved**	1. That the timetable be noted. 2. That any proposed changes to sigres list be discussed in the first instance with Mr Anderson, Director of Research and Innovation. 3. That the REF2021 Code of Practice is uploaded to the University intranet.
RESEARCH INTEGRITY		
019.032	**Considered**	The revised Concordat to support Research Integrity (**REC19/08/01**).
019.033	**Reported**	By Professor Woodburn that he been asked by the PVC Research to take on the role of research integrity champion for the University. He informed members that there were a number of clear drivers for this, principally the revised Concordat to support Research Integrity and the establishment of a Scottish HE Research Integrity Network, which he would be attending in Edinburgh in November 2019. The meeting would be an opportunity to network and gauge the main concerns within the sector. In the medium term it was intended to develop an action plan for the University based on a gap analysis, in a similar way to recent approaches to researcher development. However it was important to be proportionate. There aren't major issues but it was important to improve reporting and transparency about any incidents and issues that may arise. It was particularly important in health subject areas where there was external scrutiny from PSRBs but also on a broader University level which will be scrutinized under the terms of the Concordat. There were opportunities for the University to learn from other organisations, identify good practice, target training and develop a culture of research

		integrity as well as enhancing our processes and systems.
019.034	Discussion	Members welcomed the update and agreed that there was opportunity to learn more and enhance our own research integrity culture.
019.035	Resolved	Professor Woodburn will provide a report to the next meeting of the URC.

RESEARCH POOLING

019.036	Considered	A summary of the Independent Review of the Scottish Funding Council's Research Pooling Initiative (**REC19/09/01**)
019.037	Reported	By Ms Daly that the initiative started in 2005 and the Scottish Funding Council decide to review it this year. The main findings were: • The Research Pooling Initiative (RPI) has built critical mass and research excellence in a number of disciplines important to Scotland's research base and continued global science leadership. • There is little evidence that research pooling is embedded in the strategic investments of the individual Scottish Universities, which questions the longer-term sustainability of the initiative. • The evidence points to lost opportunities in building strong strategic alignment between the research pools and other structures, most notably the Scottish Innovation Centres • Over the timeframe of the RPI so far, the wider research and innovation landscape in the UK has not stood still, and the original aims of research pooling no longer fit the modern research landscape where the search for new knowledge and solutions increasingly crosses disciplines and sectors. As a result of these findings the review made the following recommendations: 1. A major investment at scale that builds on the collective critical mass of the RPI but reoriented to address the strategic cross-disciplinary research challenges important to Scotland by coupling to other disciplines and research and innovation structures. This is the basis of Scotland's research powerhouse of the future. 2. Direct financial underpinning of the existing research pools by SFC stops. The most effective coordination activities of the current discipline-based research pools are supported to cover the transition period between now and the implementation of Recommendation 1 (the 'transition pools'). 3. The international presence of the 'transition pools' is enhanced to ensure Scotland remains an attractive place for research and international graduates. 4. Scotland's complex research-innovation landscape is reformed to ensure that the function and purpose of the 'transition pools' and Innovation Centres are aligned, going forward as a seamless and integrated 'cradle to grave' model that can play effectively into Recommendation 1
019.038	Discussion	Mr Anderson informed members that GCU have been involved in SULSA (Life Sciences), SRPe (Engineering) and Soillse (Gaelic language and culture). Another member felt that this was an opportunity to be more vocal and influence how the debate is framed. The move towards problem solving as a

		focus instead of subject area focus was to be welcomed.
		Other members felt the key is to persuade the larger HEIs to collaborate with GCU by, for example, demonstrating a specialism in relation to the societal challenges. Many members felt that GCU needed to be more focused in order to achieve this and that the approach of waiting for calls to bid for funding was unproductive.
		Members felt that challenge was to improve our networking in the sector, potentially through hosting events and ensuring that SFC are visiting GCU more regularly.
019.039	Resolved	That the matter is revisited with the PVCR in order to broaden the debate.

CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCHERS

019.040	Considered	A Briefing paper on the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (**REC19/10/01**)
019.041	Reported	By Professor Steves that the revised Concordat had been circulated separately to research fora. This paper summarised the new document and highlighted the next steps and what the University is currently doing.
		It was expected that most HEIs would sign up to this revised Concordat and some had already done so. SFC, UUK and UKRI were signatories and it was expected that Universities Scotland would be a group signatory. As with the Concordat to support Research Integrity there were similar expectations for defined roles/responsibilities, annual reporting, transparency about processes and an action plan. There was an expectation of a gap analysis and action plan within 1 year and an annual report to be published, similar to research integrity.
		Key aspects of the refocusing were greater emphasis on research environment and culture, signatories working together on systemic challenges as well as mental health, research integrity, training opportunities, and workload allocation.
019.042	Discussion	Members were supportive of the new Concordat but some concern was expressed around the minimum 10 days professional development pro rata per year.
		Professor Steves acknowledged that this had been subject to intense debate in the consultation phase but it had been included. However greater clarity was required on a)How to evidence this; and b) how to define the 10 days (i.e. not necessarily as blocks of days but pro rata).
		A member asked if further discussion was required before signing up. Professor Steves replied that more discussion and analysis was required and sign up would be at Executive level. For the moment this was an opportunity to discuss and potentially endorse the Concordat in principle.
		It was suggested that resource implications would emerge from the gap analysis and implications could be flagged to EB. In order to implement the

		requirements of the Concordat, support at all levels would be required.
		REF implications were discussed and it was acknowledged that researcher development would be a factor in environment statements.
		Another member suggested that there was linkage to the discussion on research pooling and networking in that we should be encouraging our researchers to develop their own networks in the external research environment. The Committee should, therefore, endorse the general principles of the Concordat, whilst acknowledging further discussion was required pending the gap analysis and identification of potential resource implications.
019.043	**Resolved**	1. That the Concordat be endorsed in principle. 2. That the gap analysis is undertaken (**Action: Director of Graduate School**).
PGR STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING		
019.044	**Considered**	1. The 2018-19 HESA PGRS numbers return (**REC19/11/01**). 2. A verbal report from Director Graduate School on the PGR Recruitment and Marketing Oversight Group activities.
019. 045	**Reported**	By Professor Steves that the University was resolved to promote available PhD opportunities and was currently using *FindaPhD*, a project based website drawing from the opportunities currently available on the GCU and School PhD opportunity pages. Alongside this work was being done to update and modernise research-related webpages with Brand and Digital Content Department working with Schools and the PVCR to develop a plan and present this to the Executive Board. Hard copy material has also been produced for distribution at PhD fairs and open days. Feedback from PhD fairs has been positive with applicants seeking GCU out as a result of having viewed content on *FindaPhD*. The next steps in enhancing marketing of out PhD provision were to facilitate contact between our researchers and potential applicants. This has already worked with some success for SHLS and although there are lingering navigational issues with the other Schools, all Schools were keen to facilitate this aspect. The University was attempting to be more flexible with regard to funding and although the University aims to attract fee paying candidates there was flexibility with *FindaPhD* to convert full fee projects to, for example, part-funded. A new round of University funded PhD studentships was also imminent.
019. 046	**Discussion**	ADRs reported that there was still work to in relation to the collaboration with Brand and Content although it had improved. Professor Steves acknowledged there were issues and also that there was a lot of new staff now in B&C. In terms of web content, much of it was already there but applicants reported difficulty with navigation. Local management of content was key to success and further discussions were required with B&C on how to do this and permissions/training requirements.
019. 047	**Resolved**	That the update be noted and revisited at a future meeting.

LIVE ISSUES		
019.048	**Reported**	By Professor Currie that there was an issue with the survey tool software RedCap being installed on a School server. Guidance was sought on whether it should be used.
019.049	**Discussion**	The general advice was that if the software was unsupported by IT Services it should not be used.
019.050	**Resolved**	That the guidance with regard to research survey software be clarified (**Action: URC Secretary**).
UNIVERSITIES SCOTLAND FUNDING AND POLICY UPDATE		
019.049	**Received**	Summary of funding and policy matters from Universities Scotland RDTC (**REC19/12/01**).
REF 2021 MANAGEMENT GROUP		
019.050	**Received**	The confirmed minutes of the meetings held on: 1. 13 June 2019 (**RMG18/10/01**). 2. 27 August 2019 (**RMG19/03/01**).
RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE		
019.051	**Received**	The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019 (**RDC18/29/01**).
DEVELOPING ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS IN EXCELLENCE STEERING GROUP (DARE)		
019.052	**Received**	The confirmed minutes of the meetings held on 5 July 2019 (**DARE19/21/01**).
PGR RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING OVERSIGHT GROUP		
019.053	**Received**	Minutes of a meeting of the Group held on 5 July 2019 (**PGRM19/01/01**).
SCHOOL RESEARCH COMMITTEES		
019.054	**Received**	1. Confirmed minutes of the SCEBE RC meeting 30 January 2019 (**SCEBE/RC/18/15**). 2.Confirmed minutes of the SCEBE RC meeting 21 March 2019(**SCEBE/RC/18/17**). 3.Confirmed minutes of the SCEBE RC meeting 15 May 2019 (**SCEBE/RC/19/02**). 4.Confirmed minutes of the GSBS RC meeting on 13 February 2019(**GSBSRC/18/06**). 5.Confirmed minutes of the GSBS RC meeting on (**GSBSRC/18/07**).