

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH & INNOVATION COMMITTEE
17 February 2026

MINUTES

Present:

Tim Cheek (TC) – Dean of Postgraduate Research, FMS
Eve Cosgrave (EC) – Head of Faculty Research, FMS
Rich Dawson (RD) – Dean of Research and Innovation, SAgE
Matthew Grenby (MOG) – Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation (Chair)
David Hill (DH) – Director of Research Strategy & Development
Pauline Howie (PH) – Director of Service Delivery, NUIT
Phil Lord (PL) – Dean of Postgraduate Research, SAgE
Hannah Lynch (HL) – Research Strategy Manager
Kate McGill (KM) - Head of Faculty Research, SAgE
Lindsay Pennington (LP) – Deputy Dean of Research & Innovation, FMS
Candy Rowe (CR) – Dean of Culture and Inclusion
Nicola Simcock (NS) – Research Culture Manager
Lorna Taylor (LT) - Head of Faculty Research, HaSS
John Williams (JW) - Head of Collections, Research & Digital Futures

Apologies:

Estelle Blanks (EB) – Director of Business Development & Enterprise
Justin Durham (JD)- Dean of Research & Innovation, FMS (Lindsay Pennington deputising)
Johanna Gascoigne-Owens (JG-O) – Head of Research Funding Development
Abigail Marks (AM) Dean of Research & Innovation, HaSS
Mallikarjuna Rao Pichika (MRP) -Director of Research, NUMed
Jemima Repo (JR) - Senate Representative
Cheng Siong Chin (CSC) – Director of Research, NUIS
Jill Taylor-Roe (JTR) – Director of Academic Services & University Librarian (John Williams deputising)
Gina Tindale (GT) – NUSU Academic Officer
Alison Williams (AW) - Dean of PGR Studies, HaSS

In attendance:

Sarah Carey (SC) - Executive Assistant (Minutes)
Hannah Owens (HO) – Head of Sustainability, item 7

1. Welcome and Chair's Update

Discussed:

Research working group packages – 1 costings JD, 2 control of funding schemes RD
Institutional KPIs largely agreed, reduced in number and clarified. Research income per FTE, RG median ambition. Field weighted citation index. Again target at or above RG median, currently we are.
RD NB looking at different mechanism in weighting at Reputation Impact group.
UKRI, 3 buckets and a pitcher. Funding councils pausing grants/reclaiming money. Comms inc yesterday. Strong commitment to communicate better. Uncertainty not helpful. On funding councils, wanted to pause MRC grants so bucket 2 can come out first. BBSRC transition to always open. EPSRC only specific schemes paused. All to be back online Spring/Summer. FTSC need to recoup, limited effect in NU, more Manchester. Claims annual applicant led funding will rise, remains a concern, unclear, large proportion of bucket 1 is QR, under scrutiny.
RD met with

Industrial Strategy, work out impact of UKRI decisions on those not working in those areas.

NUAgE launch last week.

2. Notes and Actions

Received:

- a. Doc Ai: Draft Minutes of URIC 11 February 2026, and
- b. Doc Aii, Actions Log, circulated with the agenda.

Noted:

- c. Minutes of URIC 11 February 2026 accepted as a correct record.

3. Research Strategy/Culture Update

Received:

- a. Doc B, Culture QR Budget update, circulated with the agenda.

Discussed:

- b. **Human Nutrition and Exercise Research NUCoRE:** detail from BC received, Chairs Action to approve, available if colleagues want to review.
- c. **Culture QR Budget Update:**
- d. CR want to maintain momentum from PCE pilot into Culture and SPRE. Natasha Mauthner Assoc Dean Research Practice confirmed. Disciplinary and UoA needs, supporting local champions. Values and Behaviour framework taking place in house.
- e. Suggesting new posts, 1 around SPRE, piloting maturity framework. 80-90Kpa leading researchers. Reimagining leadership finishing.
- f. 2 REF posts included, previously included in URIC budget, Culture QR badging some to REF support. G and D. NB partly backfilling Pete Wheldon's time. reduced investment in other projects where possible, Keeping people fund available.
- g. Budget setting process, increased scrutiny in new posts.
- h. RD too much emphasis on new posts at a higher level? Colleagues need time and space, lack of operational support. Training really valuable, passionate previous attendees. Getting expertise out to local level. May be pushback, sensitivity to recent loss of posts and colleagues 'making do with' resource. Impact. Might these new roles take pressure off? LT and EC supportive of new roles. Unfortunate they are part of RC budget. KMcG, possibility of undertaking leading researchers in house? PL DH REF posts based on experience last 2 cycles, can't see how it would work without.
- i. MOG will be surprised if all posts supported at BSG level, this is the ideal ask, plan A. Plan b...
- j. Impact case studies. Going out speaking to researchers, support in writing narrative which supports REF. Early stage (now) Evidence gathering and co-ordination. Close to the time budget for senior researcher with knowledge of the area to finalise.
- k. Faculties feel impact is more important than SPRE at the moment. CR would like to carry on some of these conversations. Shared narrative important. Concerns about plan B for maturity framework and SPRE work if post not funded. Priorities. Better understanding of needs. LP link between institutional and unit important. LT SPRE weighting makes it less of a concern than impact.
- l. Deadline for budget submission: ? support for continuing existing posts, additional would need to go to Finance, CC etc.
- m. ACTION: continuing conversations with Faculty colleagues.

4. URIC Budget

Received:

- a. Doc C URIC Budget, circulated with the agenda.

Discussed:

Reductions, each cross cutting PVC budget £120k , N8 commitments, HPC Bede removed to allow for more REF Support.

Funding development. HL NuCoRE development, pump priming. Not always spent, can be redeployed. RFDM team

5. Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure

Received:

- a. Docs Di and Dii, circulated with the agenda.

Discussed:

Tweaks arising from concordat. ?? Job title changes and funder requirements, eg US Dept of Health.

PL doesn't cover when someone is employed and a PGR.

RD issues between PGR and supervisor, eg s unwittingly brings PRG into situation – tension. Also AI not explicitly covered.

RD would be useful to review cases, what has worked, what hasn't, what have we learned? RD issues at proposal stage not necessarily covered? IP t proposal stage. RD will follow up with Stacey.

Feedback and lessons learnt covered in annual statement on research integrity. Previous cases have led to changes in policy. Feed back yto SW, run changes by PL and RD, can approve under Chair's action.

6. Rankings Improvement Group Update

Received:

- a. Doc E Rankings Improvement Group Update, circulated with the agenda.

Discussed:

Working group increasing use of orcid, scopus alignments, awareness, (absolute rather than field weighted) citations, replacement for MYIMpact. Updates from working groups would be appreciated.

RD PhD students who have left but keep collaborating. Eg self citation counts. No too far.

MOG bwoae QS 400 contacts, reputation score, changed number of colleagues submitting as research active. Using metrics. Other institutions also do this, ie not including T&S. NB staff student ratio and international staff ratio will decrease. Hopefully overall impact positive.

7. Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research & Innovation Practice update

Received:

- a. Presentation, circulated with the agenda.

Discussed:

National Oversight Group, 20 approx Webinar to launch concordat's ? Opportunity to engage with community. Looking at current mechanisms to assess environmental impact of research. Importance of sharing good practice across the sector. NU has areas, thanks to colleagues, others also ahead. Exeter has a tool which analyses and lists impact of a research proposal at point of application. RDplan is to roll out to HEIs, collab with other Universities, welcome funded (check) KCL has a policy for when air travel can and can't be used. Implemented effectively. Wider sector body changing policies and procedures.

Becoming signatories : see slides.

July 2025 workshop: benchmarking and gaps in data.

Leadership & System Change: LEAF laboratory E Assessment Framework. Had signed before concordat, momentum has increased. Colleagues submit with evidence, Internally audited annually. Compliance with eg CRUK, Wellcome.. Peer auditing. Mandated in FMS which will protect funding.

Collaboration and Partnerships hosted LEAF NE auditor training

Emissions from Travel

Next steps – toolkit, will likely also cover funder requirements. Also align to maturity framework. Formalise reporting in integrated annual report.

RD Use of travel company. KCL , 2 phase approach – communications, restrictions on internal flights. Stage 2 mandatory. UK flights – challenge of not going directly through travel company. Are we able to influence who the next one will be and/or how they provide data to us. If possible to have a system that will prompt colleagues to choose more ES options. Comms this week on new company.

RD offsetting, debate around morality and quality of schemes. Can we invest in our own scheme rather than others. Credibility and sustainability of offsetters Focus has been decarbonisation so far.

RD where does that sit in TRAC.

8. Digital Research Sub-Group Update

Received:

- a. **Doc Fi and Fii**, circulated with the agenda.

Discussed:

PH update. Issues at coalface. Data governance and enterprise storage. Deletion, storage, transfer etc. Legacy research equipment – transferred into teaching, maintaining research. HPC, looking ahead to procurement in 2 years. Hidden IT costs in grant applications. Hearing from research colleagues inc looking ahead. 2 working groups – data storage, Alex Lord , impact of cyber on legacy equipment. 3rd meeting March. Channel for communicating digital research needs.

PL HPC important but nothing about highly computational work – software, cloud, desktop. Nothing on pathway to adoption of LRM, using tools. PL and PH to catch up. ALM? and

Using URIC as a mailing list, pool of colleagues. Another group DRSG will be pulled into, Information Governance. NAME? using the group as a conduit. Sign off pre data purging. Also Education Committee.

9. Updates and ‘white space’

Discussed:

None

10. MoU on IP Exploitation with the Trust

Received:

- a. **For information**

11. Future meetings

- a. 10-12 in Keeton Lomas Room, Armstrong Building:
 - 17 March
 - 14 April
 - 12 May
 - 23 June