Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education

Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee's Annual Report

Purpose

1. To report on the outcomes of the recent review of effectiveness of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.

Strategic plan implications

2. World leading research and greater innovation in the economy.

Background

3. The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 established the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council. Schedule 1 of the Act states that the Council must establish a committee (a "research committee") for the purposes of advising the Council on matters concerning research [section 12(1)].

4. The Council expects its Committees to review their effectiveness on an annual basis and this review covers the period January 2016 to December 2016. The committee standing orders are attached as Annex A and the current membership is attached as Annex B.

5. This report contains a summary of the views of members expressed through their completed self-evaluation questionnaires. The report also outlines future planning and priorities identified by members.

Equality and diversity assessment

6. At this time no issues concerning equality and diversity have been identified as part of this review of effectiveness. A full return is encouraged from all members. This return represents a 77% return for those members eligible to complete the self-assessment (eligibility = active members during this period).

Financial implications

7. There are no financial implications attached to this paper.

Publication

8.   This paper will be published on the Council website.

Recommendations

9.   Council is invited to:

- Note the summary of the views.

- Discuss the priorities that the Committee has highlighted in the forward look.

Further information

10.   Contact: Jenny Jamieson, Committee Clerk, tel: 0131-313 6621,
        email: jjamieson@sfc.ac.uk

Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

Committee's Annual Report 2016

Background

1. The Committee held four meetings as planned during the reporting period (1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016) as well as one other additional joint meeting with Universities Scotland's RKEC in April 2016. The key items of Committee business over the reporting period were:

   - Research Strategy
   - Research Excellence
   - Innovation support for Creative Industries
   - Innovation Strategy
   - Innovation Centres/Independent Review of the SFC Innovation Centre programme
   - Internationalisation
   - UK Government Research Developments
   - University Innovation Fund
   - Research Pools
   - College Innovation
   - 10 year infrastructure strategy
   - Concordat on open research data
   - Equality and human rights impact assessments

Membership attendance

2. The Committee convened with the following percentage of members attending each meeting in this period.

February	April	September	November
80%	64%	86%	79%

Summary of responses (by section)

Section 1: Meetings

3. Members rated highly overall the governance of the meetings with two observations.

   - Recent ICT challenges which had prevented papers being issued on time had

proved frustrating. Being able to access papers on a secure part of the SFC server might minimise this disruption happening again.

- The progress of the working groups relevant to the Committee's remit could be recorded into a 'tracker' style table. This could also include progress from across the UK. The landscape is in 'flux' in Scotland and across the UK and capturing progress as it happens would ensure that members are fully up to date.

Section 2: Business

4. Members rated highly overall the quality and level of discussion at meetings and the opportunities to discuss strategic themes and to make policy recommendations to the Council executive and to Council. There was the following observation:

- A continuous review of the balance of agenda items will ensure that the committee is keeping up with the speed of change in the policy environment.

Section 3: Content and quality of papers

5. Members rated highly overall the content and quality of papers. There was the following observation:

- Where possible, the papers could be shortened by applying references to information contained in previous committee papers.

Section 4: Membership

6. Members rated highly overall the composition of the committee and the induction for new members. There was the following two observations:

- The committee, including observers, should not increase any further in size.

- The committee in its current composition is diverse and dynamic.

Section 5: Stakeholder information

7. Members rated highly overall the provision of information on the strategic priorities of the Council/Scottish Government and other parts of the UK which inform decision making/recommendations to the Council executive and/or Council. There was the following two observations:

- Discussions on the broader context e.g. Stern review and UK industrial strategy have been helpful.

- Inviting other bodies such as the enterprise agencies to present at a

strategic level about priorities and key linkages would be useful.

Section 6: Council executive support

8.   Members rated highly overall the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council executive. There was the following two observations:

- The support of the executive is outstanding

- Papers could, in some circumstances, be more concise and succinct.

Section 7: Governance

9.   Members rated highly overall the Committee's ability to respond to, recommend and advise the Council on research and knowledge exchange strategy, policy and funding issues relevant to Scottish HE institutions and colleges with broad areas of advice. There was the following observation:

- Transparency of decision making from Committee to Council has greatly improved over the last few months.

Section 8: Forward Look

10.   Members were asked to highlight the key issues that, in their view, should be addressed in the course of the following year (2017). The following is a summary of responses (verbatim);

- Brexit and H2020/European funding
- Progress on the Research Excellence Working Group
- Enterprise and entrepreneurship education and support
- Implications from Enterprise and Skills review
- Postgraduate career development
- The innovation ecosystem SFC supports
- Incentives for colleges and universities to collaboration on innovation and knowledge exchange
- Preserving research excellence and the interpretation of REF in Scotland
- Evaluation of innovation centres
- Impact of Brexit on research activity, staff and collaborations and funding
- Adequacy of research funding
- Development of innovation and the development of that from the college sector
- Relationship between other parts of the UK and Scotland, and EU
- Continued development of international collaboration and learning
- Relationship with the new 'strategic' body
- Research pooling

- Internationalisation
- Relationship with UKRI and RUK
- Growth of numbers of doctoral students in Scotland

Comparisons with Annual Report 2015

11. Taking the annual report in 2015 as a baseline, there has not been a notable change in ratings in 2016 in any of the seven sections. As in 2015, the review overall is a positive one. More emphasis this year is noted within the returns on the need for the committee to keep up to date with research developments from across the UK reflecting the changes that have taken place in the research landscape over the last year.

Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

Standing Orders

Legislation and background

1   The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 established the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council. Schedule 1 of the Act makes provision for certain administrative and other matters with respect to the Council, including the establishment of committees.

2   Schedule 1 states that:

- the Council must establish a committee (a "research committee") for the purposes of advising the Council on matters concerning research [section 12(1)];

- the Council is to appoint one of its members to chair meetings of the research committee [section 12(2)];

- in appointing members of the research committee, the Council is to have regard to the desirability of including persons who [section 12(3)]:

  a) have experience, and have shown capacity, relating to research or the application of research; and

  b) are currently engaged in research or the application of research;

- subject to the points above, the Council is to determine the composition of its committees, the terms and conditions of committee membership, and the procedure (including any quorum) of its committees [section 14(1)];

- any of the committees of the Council may include persons who are not members of the Council [section 14(2)];

- the Council is to pay to the members of its committees (whether or not they are also members of the Council) such allowances as the Scottish Ministers may determine [section 14(3)]; and

- the Council is to keep under review the structure of its committees and the scope of the activities of each [section 14(4)].

3   Schedule 1 also states that the Council may authorise any of its committees to exercise such of its functions to such extent as it may determine [section 15(1)]. Delegated authority for each committee is contained in the remit for each committee as agreed by the Council.

4   At its meeting on 3 October 2005, the Council agreed to establish a Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee. The remit, membership, and standing orders were approved by the Council at its meeting on 10 March 2006.

5   At its meeting on 17 September 2010, the Council endorsed the amended remit, required skill set and standing orders set out here.

Committee membership - general

6   As set out in the Council's Standing Orders, the membership of a committee will be determined by the chair of the committee and the Chair of the Council.

7   Council committees must have Council representation. The chair, who will be determined by the Council, will be a Council member. Other committee members who are not members of the Council will be referred to as "external members"; and the executive's guidelines for appointing members should be followed in their selection.

8   The Chief Executive, although a member of the Council, will not normally be a member of any committee, other than the Chair's Committee.

9   A Council member's term of office on a committee will run concurrently with their Council term of office. Each external member will be appointed for a period of three years, with the possibility of serving for a further period thereafter. Before a member reaches their end of term, the Chair will consider the future remit of the committee and whether the skills set and experience required to meet this remit has changed as a result. This could result in members not being asked to serve a second term and the Chair will initiate a new recruitment process to source the required skills set. Outgoing members can, if they choose, be kept informed of future committee business as 'past members'.

10   On the expiry of a period of appointment of an external member, that member may be invited to serve for a single further period not exceeding three years. Where appropriate, periods of reappointment will be staggered to ensure some continuity of membership.

11	An external member may by giving notice in writing to the chair of the committee resign as a member of a committee. A Council member may by giving notice in writing to the Chair of the Council resign as a member of a committee.

12	If the Chair of the committee and the Chair of the Council consider that a member's attendance at meetings has been unsatisfactory or that the member is otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions required of a member, they may be given notice in writing regarding removal from the committee.

Remit of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

13	The Research Committee has a role to respond to, recommend and advise the Council on research and knowledge exchange strategy, policy and funding issues relevant to Scottish HE institutions and colleges, with broad areas of advice including but not limited to:

(i)	providing regular analyses of the **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats** in the areas of research and innovation support, taking a broad view.

(ii)	providing regular and timely advice to the Council on **prioritisation**, in the use of Council's resources to maximise delivery of the SFC Corporate Plan and to address Scottish Government outcomes.

(iii)	working with enterprise agencies and other stakeholders to give Council advice on a strategy for **innovation** and support of knowledge exchange for sustainable economic growth.

(iv)	**identifying opportunities** for Council to consider interventions to leverage significant resource into Scotland in support of research and/or knowledge exchange. Examples include the Technology Strategy Board and European funding.

Membership of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

14	The Chair of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee will be a member of the Council. At least two further Committee members will be members of the Council. It is expected that there will be about 10 external members.

15	The membership composition should have regard to equalities and include an appropriate balance across types of institutions, geography and subject

specialist areas, as well as seeking to include various additional qualities such as a UK wide view, challenge, international perspective, knowledge of post-graduate issues and research pooling.

16 The target membership profile includes members with the following key skill sets:

- Chair – council member

- University research academics (min. 4)

- Universities Scotland's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee convener (1)

- University research management (1)

- College sector senior management (1)

- Science Policy academic (1)

- University/ business and/or policy interface (1)

- Business (2)

- Business organisation (1)

- Public/ third sector policy/ research user (1)

*Individual members may cover more than one of the above characteristics.

17 In addition to the Committee's members, there should be observers with relevant research and knowledge exchange expertise from the following stakeholder groups:

- Highlands and Islands Enterprise and/<u>or</u> Scottish Enterprise

- Scottish Government

- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

18 Key stakeholder groups should be consulted with on the appointment of external committee members in line with the executive's guidelines for appointing members

Proceedings of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

19   The validity of any proceedings of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee is not affected by a vacancy in membership or by any defect in the appointment of a member.

20   The secretariat function is provided by the lead SFC directorate – Research and Innovation.

Quorum

21   The quorum for a Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting is one in excess of half the membership, and this must include at least one Council member. However, when not quorate the members present may decide to proceed with a meeting at which items on the agenda are considered and any recommendations reached are put to the next Committee meeting for decision if time allows or otherwise are put to Council for decision, with a clear statement that the meeting had not been quorate.

Role of the Chair in Committee meetings

22   It is the role of the Chair to see that Committee business is conducted in an orderly fashion and to ensure that members obtain a fair hearing. Members wishing to speak shall do so through the Chair.

23   The Chair is also responsible for leading the meeting to reach decisions. The Committee will normally make decisions on the basis of agreement by consensus, but where the Chair believes it to be in the interest of the progress of a debate, or where it is proposed and seconded by two members present, the Clerk may be asked to count and record a vote by a show of hands.

24   As set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation, generally committees are expected to take matters as far as appropriate before making recommendations to the Council. The Chair of the Committee will normally have responsibility for judging when it is appropriate to make recommendations to Council: where items are routine, they will stay with the Committee until the final stage of decision-making; and where items are novel, unusual or potentially contentious, proposals should be considered by Council at an earlier stage.

Collective responsibility and standards of conduct

25   Committee members should be encouraged to express any differing views within the Committee's internal decision-making process. In the event that a member has a reservation regarding a particular decision, they may ask for their dissent to be formally recorded in the minute. Once a decision has been reached, all members should support it.

26   Committee members should observe the same rules as those set out under the Code of Conduct for SFC board members. This can be viewed here: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/AboutUs/SFCs_Code_of_Conduct_for_Board _members.pdf

Nomination of a Vice-Chair

27   The Chair may nominate a Vice-Chair to act as deputy in the absence of the Chair at Committee meetings. This nomination will be subject to the approval of the Committee.

Clerk to the Committee

28   The Clerk to the Committee will advise the Chair on the conduct of Committee business and agenda planning. The Clerk will also advise Committee members on formal matters relating to the Committee.

Conflict of interest

29   All external members are required to complete a register of interests on appointment (Council members complete this form on appointment to the Council) and must notify the Clerk when any changes to this need to be made. Members' registers of interests will be made publicly available on the Scottish Funding Council website.

30   If any member has, or could be perceived to have, an interest in a matter that is being considered by the Committee, then it is their duty to declare that interest at the start of the meeting or as soon as they become aware of it, whether or not that interest has already been recorded in their register of interests. This declaration will be recorded in the minutes by the Clerk. The member must decide, taking advice from the Chair, whether they should:

- remain in the meeting and participate fully;

- remain in the meeting but make no contribution; or

- withdraw from the meeting for the discussion of, and any decision on, the relevant item.

The Chair may, in any event, ask a member to leave the meeting if s/he thinks it is appropriate.

31   Whilst individual members have a responsibility to consider their position with regard to conflict of interest, prior to the meeting the Clerk will consider the agenda in the context of the register of members' interests and advise the Chair accordingly.

Attendance at meetings

32   Meetings will normally be attended by the executive's Director of Research and Innovation.

33   In addition, other members of staff of the Council's executive may attend meetings as required for agenda items for which they are presenting information, to be available to respond to questions on matters arising from papers, to hear the debate where the Committee's discussion will inform their work, or as part of their on-going professional development.

34   Attendees may have a role in introducing papers, providing clarification, and contributing to discussions, but may not take part in Committee decisions.

35   As set out in the legislation, a representative of the Scottish Ministers is entitled to participate in any deliberations (but not in decisions) of any committee of the Council [section 16 of Schedule 1].

Observers

36   Any member of the Council has the right to attend Committee meetings as an observer by agreement with the Chair.

37   Observers may, with the permission of the Chair, speak and contribute to discussions, but may not take part in Committee decisions.

Timing of meetings

Scheduled (or ordinary) meetings

38   The Committee will meet on an appropriate number of occasions in a year to carry out its duties effectively, but will meet at least twice a year.

39   The schedule of meetings for each year will be agreed by the Committee in the previous year, following consultation with the Chair by the Clerk and taking into account the dates of Council meetings.

Extra (or special) meetings

40   The Chair may convene additional meetings as s/he deems necessary.

41   The Committee may agree to delegate to a sub-group responsibility for a particular matter. The sub-group would then report back to the Committee.

Agenda and papers

Agenda items

42   Members will have the opportunity to suggest items of business and comment on the draft agenda and draft minute before each meeting. The Clerk to the Committee will be the first point of contact for members. The final agenda and designation of business will be decided by the Chair.

43   Unless otherwise agreed with the Chair, items for endorsement or for noting will be starred (*) on the agenda and the Chair will ask at the start of the meeting whether members wish to discuss any of the starred items. (Members should notify the Clerk to the Committee of this wish in advance of the meeting.) Unless members specifically ask to discuss these items, the Chair will assume that they have been endorsed or noted.

Distribution of agenda and papers

44   The agenda of business and accompanying papers will normally be distributed no later than one week before a scheduled meeting of the Committee.

Freedom of Information

Publishing papers

45   The Committee will decide at its meeting which of its papers will be published, or published in edited form, on the Council's website. The Committee's agenda and those papers that the Committee considers publishable/ publishable in edited form will be made available on the Council's website after the next meeting of Council.

46   Committee papers, as with all documentation produced by the Council, are subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Requests for Committee papers not published on the Council's website will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's normal freedom of information procedures.

Approval of minutes of Committee meetings

47   Minutes of a Committee meeting will be submitted to the Chair for preliminary approval, and thereafter to the subsequent meeting of the Committee for formal approval.

Reporting to the Council

48   The minutes of each Committee meeting will be reported to the Council at the next scheduled Council meeting for noting – whether they have been confirmed or are unconfirmed but approved by the Chair.

49   At each Council meeting there will be the opportunity for the Chair to raise orally matters that s/he thinks the Council needs to be aware of.

50   The Committee will also conduct an annual self-evaluation and produce an annual report for consideration by the Council.

Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

Membership @ March 2017

Members	Term of office expires
Professor Anne Anderson Vice-Principal and Head of College of Social Sciences University of Glasgow	1st January 2020
Professor Tim Bedford Professor of Risk & Decision Analysis University of Strathclyde	31 August 2019
Dr Alicia Greated Director of Research and Enterprise Heriot-Watt University	1st January 2020
Dr Jano van I. Hemert Research Director, Optos	31 August 2019
Professor Susan Craw Faculty of Design & Technology, Robert Gordon University	30 October 2018
Audrey Cumberford Principal and Chief Executive of West College Scotland	Council Member 2 October 2017
Professor David Cumming Dean of Research and Knowledge Transfer, College of Science and Engineering, University of Glasgow	30 October 2018
Professor Tom Inns Director, Glasgow School of Art	1st January 2020
Dr Siobhan Jordan Director of Interface	31 August 2019
Professor Sir Tim O'Shea Convener of US's RKEC Principal & Vice Chancellor, University of Edinburgh	Linked to Convener role
Ian Reid Chief Executive, CENSIS Innovation Centre	31 August 2019
Douglas Mundie	Council Member 2 October 2017
Dr Keith Nicholson Consultant	Council member 3 October 2019
Professor Albert Rodger (Chair) Vice Principal, External Affairs University of Aberdeen	Council Member 2 October 2017
Professor Jonathan Seckl Vice Principal Planning, Resources & Research Policy University of Edinburgh	1st January 2020

Observers	
Morven Cameron, Highlands and Islands Enterprise	On-going
Dr Andrew Howie, Scottish Enterprise	On-going
Teresa Martin, Roddy Macdonald, Scottish Government	On-going
Carolyn Reeve, BIS	On-going
Alexandra Vincent, RCUK	On-going