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**RESEARCH GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Meeting held on  
**Tuesday 9 November 2010**

**MINUTES**

*PRESENT*

Professor David Price [*Chair*]  
Ms Sarah Brant  
Lord Hart of Chilton  
Mr Tim Perry

In attendance: Dr Michele Dres [*Secretary*]

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Brian Balmer, Dr Sylvie Delacroix, Professor Raymond MacAllister, Dr Mary Phillips, Dr Arad Reisberg

*Key to abbreviations*

COI	Conflict of Interest
HOD	Head of Department
RGC	Research Governance Committee
RSC	Research Strategy Committee
SCRG	[RSC] Sub-Committee on Research Governance
TOR	Terms of Reference
UKRIO	UK Research Integrity Office

1 **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE; TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP**

**Noted**

- 1.1 As a result of the review of UCL's committee structure in the academic session 2009-10, the Research Strategy Committee had been disestablished with effect from 1 September 2010, and the RSC Sub-Committee on Research Governance reconstituted as a full UCL standing committee with effect from the same date. Research Governance Committee would report, by submission of Minutes, to Academic Committee. Its terms of reference were in all other respects unchanged from those of the former Sub-Committee on Research Governance.
- 1.2 Professor Stephen Caddick had been appointed Vice-Provost (Enterprise). Professor Caddick's successor on RGC was Dr Brian Balmer, Department of Science and Technology Studies.
- 1.3 The RGC Secretary for the 2010-11 academic year was Dr Michele Dres.

**Received**

- 1.4 At APPENDIX RGC 01/01 (10-11) - the terms of reference of RGC, for information.
- 1.5 At APPENDIX RGC 01/02 (10-11) – the constitution and membership of RGC, for information

**Discussion**

- 1.6 RGC considered means by which it could continue to ensure that UCL's research governance policies and procedures were effectively communicated to its research community. RGC noted that the UCL website was an important communications tool, and therefore agreed that the RGC Secretary would check that its profile on relevant UCL webpages was sufficiently high. RGC thought that, following its reconstitution as a full standing committee, it would be timely to raise the level of awareness of its work within UCL, and therefore agreed that the Chair would, in the next academic term, give a presentation on RGC's work to one of the Provost's regular meetings with Heads of Department.

**Resolved**

- 1.7 That the RGC Secretary check that RGC's profile on relevant UCL webpages was sufficiently high.  
**ACTION: RGC Secretary**
- 1.8 That arrangements be made for the Chair, in the next academic term, to give a presentation on RGC's work to one of the Provost's regular meetings with Heads of Department.  
**ACTION: Director of Academic Services/the Chair**

## 2 MINUTES

### ***Noted***

- 2.1 The Minutes of the meeting of SCRG held on 3 June 2010 [SCRG Minutes 23-33, 2009-10], issued previously, were confirmed by RGC and signed by the Chair.

## 3 ROLE OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS IN RESEARCH GOVERNANCE

[SCRG Minute 24A, 2009-10]

### ***Noted***

- 3.1 This matter followed from previous minutes of the SCRG.
- 3.2 At its meeting held on 3 June 2010, SCRG had noted that the following items might be included in the academic staff appraisal process:
- (i) a tick box and a comments box to confirm that a discussion had taken place regarding research ethics and managing risk;
  - (ii) a tick box to confirm that issues of conflict or potential conflict of interest had been considered, and a declaration on interests had been made in the last 12 months;
  - (iii) a comments box to confirm that a discussion about the impact of research had taken place;
  - (iv) a tick box to confirm that the member of staff had updated their profiles on IRIS and the Research Publications Service.

SCRG had noted that if a bid for resources to make the staff appraisal system electronic in the 2010-2011 academic session was successful, this would provide an opportunity to implement the above additions to the appraisal process. SCRG had agreed that the Director of Human Resources would arrange for the items noted above to be included in the academic staff appraisal process.

- 3.3 Work on implementing the additions to the academic staff appraisal process listed at 3.2 above was in progress.

### ***Reported***

- 3.4 The items listed at 3.2 above were ready to be incorporated into the new electronic staff appraisal system as soon as the system went live.
- 3.5 While certain senior members of staff including HoDs, Deans, and Vice-Provosts were appraised annually, appraisals of many other categories of staff, including those at professorial level, were not required to be conducted more frequently than biennially, and were not always conducted by the HoD (since there was a limit on the number of appraisals to be conducted by any one member of staff).

### ***Discussion***

- 3.6 The Chair invited RGC to reflect on the role staff appraisal could play in encouraging staff to reflect on research ethics and governance. RGC thought

that, because: (i) not all research staff were reviewed annually, or by their HoD; and (ii) the extent to which research ethics and governance could be addressed during appraisals was uncertain, it would be desirable for there to be an additional avenue through which staff reflected on the ethics and governance of their research. RGC thought that this additional route should be tailored to the needs of individual departments, and capable of generating a metric according to which its effectiveness could be measured. RGC noted that such a route could build on the preliminary work conducted by the SCRG Working Party on the Misuse of Research [see *SCRG Minutes 15 and 29, 2009-10*]. RGC therefore agreed that the Chair would propose to Faculty Deans that they raise awareness of research governance and ethics - including issues relating to Col, and misuse of research - through an annual event of whatever format they considered most appropriate, at which attendance would constitute compliance with UCL's requirement for relevant staff to consider these matters. RGC agreed that the Chair would include this matter in the list of issues to be presented to the Provost's meeting with Heads of Departments in the next academic term.

- 3.7 RGC noted that the the data collected via the tick boxes listed in 3.2 above were metrics for which it had responsibility to oversee and coordinate.

**Resolved**

- 3.8 That the Chair propose to Faculty Deans that they raise awareness of research governance and ethics, including issues relating to Col and misuse of research, through an annual faculty event at which attendance would constitute compliance with UCL's requirement for relevant staff to consider these matters.

**ACTION: the Chair**

- 3.9 That the Chair include the proposal for annual faculty research governance and ethics events, described in 3.6 above, in the list of matters to be presented to the Provost's meeting with Heads of Departments in the next academic term.

**ACTION: the Chair**

**4 GUIDELINES ON ACCEPTABLE RESEARCH FUNDING PROVIDERS**

[*SCRG Minute 30B, 2009-10*]

**Noted**

- 4.1 At its meeting held on 3 June 2010, SCRG had noted that while UCL had an Ethical Investment Review Committee there was no similar body for the consideration of acceptable research funding providers. SCRG had agreed that the SCRG Secretary, in consultation with the Chair and the Director of Academic Services, would establish a group to consider acceptable research funding providers.
- 4.2 A Task and Finish Group on Acceptable Research Funding Providers had been established, and was due to meet in the next Academic Term. The members of the group were: Professor Jo Wolff, Philosophy (Chair); Ms Susan Crane, International Health Research Programme Director, UCL Institute for Global Health and Centre for International Health (TBC); Professor Jane Holder, Reader in Environmental and European Community Law; Professor Mark Maslin, Director of the UCL Environment Institute; and Dr Mary Phillips, Director of Research Planning.

**Reported**

- 4.3 It was anticipated that the Task and Finish Group on Acceptable Research Funding Providers would provide RGC with a draft document outlining a set of principles according to which the acceptability of potential research funding providers could be judged.

**5 LAPTOP ENCRYPTION BOARD**

**Noted**

- 5.1 A UCL Laptop Encryption Board, chaired by the Head of the UCL Computer Security Team, Ms Marion Rosenberg, had been convened to put in place a centrally managed service to encrypt laptops and other mobile devices carrying sensitive or confidential data. The project was currently in its pilot phase.

**Received**

- 5.2 At APPENDIX RGC 01/05 (10-11) – a note from the Laptop Encryption Board on its work, for information.

**Discussion**

- 5.3 RGC welcomed the report from the Laptop Encryption Board, whose work it encouraged and would continue to follow with interest.

**6 RESEARCH MISCONDUCT**

**Noted**

- 6.1 At its meeting held on 16 October 2008, the RSC Working Group on Research Governance had agreed that it should receive an annual report on the operation of the UCL Procedure for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research from the Director of Academic Services.
- 6.2 At its meeting held on 20 October 2009, the SCRG had agreed that, once the research misconduct case being conducted at the time had concluded, UCL's Procedure for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research would be revised as appropriate by the Director of Academic Services, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources.
- 6.3 UCL had been asked by UKRIO to complete a confidential questionnaire on misuse in research by 15 October 2010. After consultation with the Vice-Provost (Research)'s office, the Director of Academic Services had submitted a return on behalf of UCL by the due date.

**Received**

- 6.4 At APPENDIX RGC 01/06 (10-11) – the annual report from the Director of Academic Services on UCL's Procedure for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Academic Research.
- 6.5 An oral report from Mr Tim Perry, including an update on the process of reviewing and revising the UCL research misconduct procedure.
- 6.6 At APPENDIX RGC 01/07 (10-11) – a note from the UKRIO on its misuse of research questionnaire, for information.

**Reported**

- 6.7 The annual report listed at 6.4 above referred, for the first time, to all cases considered by screening panels under UCL's research misconduct procedure during the preceding 12 months. Previously, only those that were recommended to proceed to full investigation had been included in the annual report.
- 6.8 It was intended that a summary of the findings of a recent UCL research misconduct investigation panel, which had found the allegations of misconduct to be proven and led to the retraction of a paper previously published in *Nature*, was expected to be published in the near future on the UCL website. This measure was being taken in the interest of fairness to co-authors of the retracted paper.
- 6.9 The Director of Academic Services and the Director of Human Resources were continuing to update UCL's Research Misconduct Procedure, taking account as appropriate of the model procedure published by UKRIO, with the intention of implementing a revised procedure in the New Year 2011.

**Discussion**

- 6.10 RGC considered that the intention to publish on the UCL website a summary of the findings of the UCL research misconduct investigation described at 6.8 above was correct and fair<sup>1</sup>. More generally, RGC considered that the degree to which findings of UCL research misconduct investigations should be made public would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis; caution would be necessary to achieve the correct balance of openness and fairness in each case.
- 6.11 RGC thought that the creation of a panel of individuals willing in principle to conduct UCL research misconduct investigations would be useful, and considered that members of such panels should where possible be drawn from its own membership. RGC therefore agreed that the Director of Academic Services, with the Director of Human Resources, would arrange to: (i) increase the number of RGC's Nominated members to six; and (ii) amend RGC's ToR to include a requirement for its Nominated members to act as the first point of reference for officers charged with convening research misconduct screening or investigation panels.

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<sup>1</sup> The statement was duly posted online on 26 November 2010 – at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-services/documents/UCL-Statement-26-November-2010.pdf>.

**Resolved**

- 6.12 That the Director of Academic Services and the Director of Human Resources arrange to: (i) increase the number of RGC's Nominated members to six; and (ii) amend RGC's ToR to indicate that its Nominated members were expected to be willing to lead research misconduct investigations.

**ACTION: Director of Academic Services and Director of Human Resources**

**7 CONFIDENTIALITY OF RGC PROCEEDINGS**

**Discussion**

- 7.1 RGC noted that it was difficult to determine in advance of its meetings which parts of its proceedings would need to be recorded as Confidential to the Committee, and therefore agreed that, in the future, its Agenda and papers would be labelled Confidential to the Committee in their entirety, while its Minutes would be divided into Open and Confidential sections.

**Resolved**

- 7.2 That future RGC Agendas and papers be labelled Confidential to the Committee in their entirety, and RGC Minutes divided into Open and Confidential sections.

**ACTION: RGC Secretary**

**8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Noted**

- 8.1 The next meeting of RGC was due to take place at 2pm on Tuesday 8 February 2011, in the Meeting Room, 2 Taviton Street.

**Discussion**

- 8.2 RGC noted that it was difficult for its lay member to attend afternoon meetings, and therefore agreed that the RGC Secretary would reschedule its Spring and Summer Term meetings accordingly.

**Resolved**

- 8.3 That the RGC Secretary reschedule RGC's Spring and Summer Term meetings to take place in the morning.

**ACTION: RGC Secretary**

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4 January 2011  
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