



Minutes

Meeting: UKRI-BBSRC Bioscience for People and Talent STRATEGY ADVISORY PANEL

Date and Time: 4th and 5th of September 2023

Venue: Hilton Birmingham Metropole

Attendance

| Panel Members |
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| Professor Jerry Roberts (University of Plymouth) - Chair Professor Anastasia Callaghan (University of Portsmouth) Dr Karen Clegg (University of York) Professor Dave Evans (John Innes Centre) Dr Jacqueline Hall (AstraZeneca) Professor Raheela Khan (University of Nottingham) Professor Candy Rowe (Newcastle University) - Virtually Dr Jen Vanderhoven (National Horizons Centre) – Virtually first day |
| Invited Experts |
| Dr Joe Sallmen (John Innes Centre) Dr Cynthia Okoro-Shekwaga (University of Leeds) Professor Andrew Filby (Newcastle University) – Virtually second day Mr Russell Wilson (Heriot-Watt University) - First day and item 6, 7 second day Dr Sarah Bennett (University of Warwick)- Second day Professor Narender Ramnani (Royal Holloway, University of London) – Virtually second day for items 8, 9 and 10 Ms Clare Viney (Careers Research and Advisory Centre) - Second day for items 8, 9 and 10 |
| BBSRC Office |
| Dr Harriet Day - Secretariat Dr Ariadna Miquel Clopés- Secretariat Dr David McAllister Dr Robert Hardwick Dr Clare Bhunnoo Dr Aidan Grimsley Miss Emily Finnegan Dr Javier Pardo Diaz Miss Ella Butler |
| Other Attendees |
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| Apologies |
| Dr Janet Metcalfe (Vitae) |

Agenda

| Timing | Item num. | Item | Item Ref | Meeting Pack Page |
|---------------|-----------|---|--------------|-------------------|
| | | Monday 4 September | | |
| From 10:30 | | Convene and refreshments | - | - |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | 1 | Director's Update | Oral | - |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | 2 | EDI Action plan | PAT 01_03_23 | 4 |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | | Lunch | | |
| 13:30 – 13:50 | 3 | FTMA update | Oral | - |
| 13:50 – 15:00 | 4 | Studentships (part 1) | PAT 02_03_23 | 8 |
| 15:00 – 15:15 | | Break | | |
| 15:15 – 16:15 | 4 | Studentships (part 2) | PAT 02_03_23 | 8 |
| 16:15 – 17:00 | 5 | EDI in TPs | PAT 03_03_23 | 13 |
| 18:30 – 21:00 | | Group Dinner at Hilton Birmingham Metropole | | |
| | | Tuesday 5 September | | |
| From 8:45 | | Convene and refreshments | - | - |
| 9:00 – 10:00 | 6 | RTP/ Research Survey | PAT 04_03_23 | 21 |
| 10:00 – 10:45 | 7 | RTP/ECR in peer review | PAT 05_03_23 | 33 |
| 10:45 – 11:00 | | Break and guests arrive | | |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | 8 | Institute research culture monitoring | PAT 06_03_23 | 39 |
| 12:00 – 12:20 | 9 | Future ways of working | Oral | - |
| 12:20 – 12:30 | 10 | AOB | Oral | - |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | | Lunch and farewell | | |

Summary and actions

| Item | Paper ID. | Summary and actions |
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| 1 | Director's Update and Chair's Introduction | The Chair invited panel members and office staff to take part in a brief round of introductions |
| 2 | EDI Action plan PAT 01_03_23 | Clare Bhunoo talked about the BBSRC EDI Action Plan and provided examples on what has been done and what can be done in the future. The panel recognised the significance of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and expressed a willingness to contribute but called for clear guidance on implementation. They discussed EDI data collection, narrative CVs, target-setting, network utilisation, and the need for detailed reviewer guidance. |
| 3 | FTMA update | Javier Pardo introduced the launch of the new Flexible Talent Mobility Accounts (FTMA) found here: Flexible Talent Mobility Accounts (FTMA) – UKRI |
| 4 | Studentships PAT 02_03_23 | Harriet Day talked about the future of doctoral training schemes. The panel discussed the next phase of doctoral training, emphasising clearer communication about different programs and suggesting an 80% landscape and 20% focal investment split with flexibility. They recommended involving the community in generating ideas and aligning them with priorities. For focal investments, they favoured industry participation of 30-40% and gathering community input. To measure excellence, they considered research strategy, culture, and a positive student experience, advocating narrative descriptors over quantitative metrics. For regional distribution, they proposed financial incentives for students or institutions, targeting underrepresented groups, and connecting smaller organisations with larger hubs. They also discussed the challenges of combining doctoral training programs. In conclusion, the panel agreed that there needed to be both more and clearer communication from BBSRC detailing the next round of doctoral training. BBSRC agreed to take these considerations back for further internal discussion. |
| 5 | EDI in TPs PAT 03_03_23 | Harriet Day presented slides that were provided to attendees prior to the meeting about EDI across doctoral training partnerships (DTPs). They discussed recognising and rewarding "hidden supervisors" and "rescue supervisors" in supervisory teams. Prioritising wellbeing and mental health support for students and staff was highlighted, with a focus on training programs for identifying mental health issues. The panel suggested collecting evidence of impact rather than just activity data but acknowledged challenges in data collection. |
| 6 | RTP/ Research Survey PAT 04_03_23 | Emily Finnegan presented the bioscience researcher and technical staff survey and explained that researchers and technicians are facing barriers to training, and management are also facing barriers to leadership training. The panel discussed funding options for professional registration costs. They also considered differences between technical and academic management, suggesting partnerships between the two for effective technical management. Mandatory mentoring for BBSRC-funded technicians was proposed. Involving |

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| | | technical staff in grant writing and ensuring their 10-day continuous professional development entitlement were key points, with emphasis on communication and training. New courses for technician training were recommended to address their unique needs. |
| 7 | RTP/ECR in peer review PAT 05_03_23 | Aidan Grimsley explained the idea of introducing Early Career Researchers (ECR) and Research Technical professionals (RTP) to peer review process. The panel were supportive and discussed strategies to encourage their engagement, including creating an accessible database, updating reviewer identification guidance, and providing training opportunities, emphasising the need for a cultural shift in peer review. |
| 8 | Institute research culture monitoring PAT 06_03_23 | Clare Bhunnoo explained the importance of research culture and summarised the outcomes from the recent Institute Assessment Exercise which included assessment of research culture for seven of the eight institutes (the final institute being assessed in 2023). The panel identified challenges related to lack of evidence and recognised the differences between institutions, supporting for personalised approaches while maintaining baseline expectations. The panel stressed the importance of improved visibility, reporting, and communication, particularly regarding EDI, career development and mental health, and called for more workshops to enhance understanding of research culture at all levels of institutions. |
| 9 | Future ways of working | The panel proposed a flexible approach to organising meetings, emphasising the importance of scheduling them based on specific needs rather than adhering to fixed terms. The panel collectively recognised the value of face-to-face meetings and recommended providing feedback on various topics before in-person meetings to enhance their effectiveness. |
| 10 | AOB | The panel commented on the changes in prices to visas and NHS surcharges and the effect on talent mobility. Jerry Roberts concluded the meeting with thanks to everyone for their contributions and extended a thank you to everyone on behalf of the BBSRC and wished leaving panel members well. |