



Minutes

Meeting: UKRI-BBSRC Bioscience for PEOPLE AND TALENT STRATEGY ADVISORY PANEL

Date: 1st-2nd April 2025

Venue: DoubleTree by Hilton City Centre in Bristol

Attendance

Apologies: Professor Fiona Ducottered (UCL Drug Discovery Institute); Professor Karen Halliday (University of Edinburgh; Mrs Jacqueline Hall (AstraZeneca)

People and Talent Panel Members

Prof Jerry Roberts (Chair): University of Plymouth

Prof Jon Lane: University of Bristol

Dr Clare Stevenson: John Innes Centre

Dr James Henstock: Northumbria University

Dr Mary Doherty: Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre

Dr Catherine Jopling: University of Nottingham

Prof Anastasia Callaghan: University of Portsmouth

Mr Adrian Smith: Unilever

Researcher Subgroup Panel Members

Dr Stephen Marshall: University of Oxford

Research Technical Professional Subgroup Panel Members

Dr Richard Collins: University of Manchester

BBSRC Staff

Dr Karen Lewis: Executive Director, Capability and Innovation- Day One

Dr Robert Hardwick: Associate Director, People and Talent

Dr Noriane Simon: Head of Enterprise and Ventures- Day Two

Dr Harriet Day: Senior Portfolio Manager

Dr Clare Bhunnoo: Senior Portfolio Manager

Dr Aidan Grimsley: Senior Portfolio Manager

Mr Kieran Moulton: Portfolio Manager

Miss Emily Finnegan: Portfolio Manager

Meeting Agenda

Timing	Item	Item Ref	Paper Ref	Page
Day 1	Tuesday 1st April			
From 12:00	Arrivals			
From 12:30	Convene and light lunch served in the Kiln restaurant	-	-	-
13:30	Declaration of interest check (Chair); Introduction to new members; Minutes from the previous meeting (October 2024); Chairs business	Oral (Prof Jerry Roberts)	-	-
14:00	BBSRC update	Oral (Dr Robert Hardwick)	-	-
14:30	Equality, diversity, and inclusion and expert advisory group summary; Institute culture conference summary	Oral (Dr Clare Bhunnoo)	-	-
15:15	Break and Refreshments Served in the Foyer / Check in			
15:45	Fellowships review	Oral (Dr Aidan Grimsley)	PAT_01_01_25	4-12
17:00	Meeting Close			
18:00 – 21:00	Evening Meal Served in the Kiln Restaurant			
Day 2	Wednesday 2nd April			
From 8:45	Convene and refreshments served in the Foyer	-	-	-
9:00	Studentships update	Oral (Dr Harriet Day/Mr Kieran Moulton)	PAT_02_01_25	13-17
9:30	Professional doctorate and PhD by publication panel discussion	Oral (Miss Emily Finnegan)	PAT_03_01_25	18-21
10:15	Break and Refreshments Served in the Foyer			
10:45	Enterprise and entrepreneurship skills update	Oral (Dr Noriane Simon)	PAT_04_01_25	22-25
11:45	Flexible talent mobility accounts report update	Oral (Dr Aidan Grimsley)	-	-
11:50	Any other business and closing remarks; Actions for skills and careers team/panel to take forward	-	-	-
12:10 – 1:30	Meeting Close and Lunch in Kiln Restaurant			

Session Summaries

Item	Session Name	Summary
1	Welcome and Introductions to new members	Jerry Roberts welcomed the panel and introduced new member Mr Adrian Smith to the panel, facilitating introductions. Jerry Roberts also acknowledged the declarations of interest for the panel and provided actions of the minutes of the last meeting held on 14 th -15 th October 2024.
2	BBSRC Update	Robert Hardwick gave an update on the BBSRC spending review, noting that some approval has been given for phase 1 (25/26) and further information will be communicated to the community in due course. The BBSRC forward look refresh was also discussed and it was shared that this has been drafted and will go to the BBSRC executive board at the end of April 2025; modern bioscience workforce is a key element of this document as well as developing a supportive research culture and environment. Finally, potential future opportunities with the MoD were discussed and BBSRCs continued alignment with strategic government missions.
3	Equality, diversity, and inclusion and expert advisory group summary; Institute culture conference summary	Clare Bhunnoo provided an overview of the Connecting Culture conference in Norwich and EAG meeting that took place in March and noted greater diversity in panels + pool of experts. Furthermore, the benefits of EDI activities are starting to be evidenced, however, there is still work to do as only 25% of leads on research grants are female and more work is required on data collection for socio-economic status and how disability can affect prospective applicants and funded researchers. Key outcomes also included that the EDI definition was widened to include equity, belonging and accessibility and an EAG request was made for more robust data.
4	Fellowships review	<p>Aidan Grimsley ran a series of 30-minute breakouts generating panel discussion on potential alterations to BBSRC's fellowships provision to optimise our support for bioscience research and innovation leaders. Focusing panel conversation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaps in the bioscience career pipeline that are not currently supported by BBSRC's fellowships provision - If and how BBSRC should adjust its fellowship provision if UKRI FLFs are discontinued or scaled back. - How BBSRC should adjust our fellowships offerings under different spending review outcomes - Further work for BBSRC to conduct during the review of their fellowship offerings that would assist with any of the above considerations <p>Action for BBSRC to move ahead with a task and finish group to consider the above in more detail, as discussed in the previous PATSAP meeting held on 14th-15th October 2024.</p>
5	Studentships Update	Harriet Day and Kieran Moulton provided an update on BBSRCs Doctoral Landscape Awards, Industrial Doctoral Landscape Awards, and two Doctoral Focal Award Opportunities in AI and Data Science and Engineering Biology, stating that the delivery of these opportunities are on track to meet timeline goals. Panel members were asked to consider and advise on the following questions:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can BBSRC work with its portfolio of doctoral programmes to deliver doctoral training in line with evolving UKRI and government priorities? - How do we assess the quantitative and qualitative impact of our doctoral student experience, and what are some examples of performance indicators? <p>The panel noted that BBSRC funded studentship programmes should look to utilise interaction with each other regarding knowledge exchange to collaboratively work towards addressing changing strategic needs across the bioscience sector and consider how remit beyond this scope may be beneficial.</p>
6	Professional doctorate and PhD by publication panel discussion	The discussion was led by Emily Finnegan and the panel were asked to discuss the possibility of BBSRC considering actively supporting alternative PhD routes. These routes include professional doctorates and PhDs by publication/portfolio. The panel provided input on the potential benefits and challenges across the different skills and career pathways within the bioscience sector. The panel considered what communities these routes may appeal to, noting that research technical professionals may be most interested in this, but acknowledged that this should not become a career expectation. Additionally, the panel raised concerns about the lack of awareness from both academic and industry partners about how these opportunities are implemented, their assessment criteria, and the community potentially viewing these alternative routes to PhD as sub-par PhDs. However, the panel overall agreed that these alternative routes are something for BBSRC to consider and action BBSRC staff to continue having these conversations internally.
7	Enterprise and entrepreneurship skills update	Noriane Simon led a session on the panels current understanding of E&E skills support landscape for bioscience researchers and innovators in the UK, facilitating discussion on what aspects work well, and where it would benefit from improvements. Panel feedback included a need for BBSRC to connect with communities that are not already directly supported by the support landscape and that initial input from current BBSRC supported schemes/grants would be preferable initial points of contact, with the view to upscale into the wider bioscience community perspectives. Other key feedback from the panel included encouraging institutions to monetise their equipment and facilities without encouraging them to centralise it, which can have unintended impacts, such as making it less accessible. Additionally, equipment users are sometimes forwarded on to lesser-known facilities where their facilities are oversubscribed and could this be formalised somehow and offer a route for commercialisation/building revenue.
8	Flexible talent mobility accounts report update	The panel felt that the key updates relating to this report were covered and addressed in previous sessions throughout this PAT SAP meeting and Aidan Grimsley asked for panel members to contact them with any questions or queries arising from the previous discussions ahead of the upcoming annual reports that due to be circulated.
9	AOB	The panel did not raise any other business beyond some additional studentship questions which are outlined in item 5.