



Minutes of the UKRI Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday 16 July 2025
Location: Caxton House, London
Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm

Board Members and Observers	
Sir Andrew Mackenzie (UKRI Chair)	Professor Nola Hewitt-Dundas
Siobhan Peters CMG (UKRI CFO & Interim AO)	Russell Schofield-Bezer
The Baroness Bull CBE	Ruwan Weerasekera
Annie Callanan	Nigel Toon
Rita Dhut	Priya Guha MBE
Alexandra Jones (Director General for Science, Innovation and Growth, DSIT)	Professor Sir Ian Chapman (incoming UKRI CEO)

Executive Committee Attendees	
Anne Ferguson Smith (BBSRC Executive Chair, for item 9)	Tom Adeyoola (IUK Executive Chair)
Charlotte Deane (EPSRC Executive Chair, for items 7-9)	Michele Dougherty (STFC Executive Chair, for item 9)
Dan Shah (UKRI Chief of Investment Planning and Strategy)	Poli Stuart-Lacey (UKRI, Chief of External Affairs and Communications)
Juliette Meek, UKRI Finance Director	

Attendees for items only	
UKRI Head of Risk & Assurance (for item 6)	UKRI Director for Commercialisation (for item 8)
UKRI Head of Performance and Planning (for item 7)	UKRI Infrastructure Portfolio Director (for item 9)
UKRI Performance Lead (for item 7)	UKRI Head of UKRI Research Sustainability Policies (for item 9)
UKRI Planning and Performance Specialist (for item 7)	UKRI Strategy and Planning Lead (for item 9)

Apologies	
Jane Norman (Board Member)	

Secretariat	
UKRI Integrative Secretariat Function – Strategic Lead	UKRI Integrative Secretariat Function – Strategic Manager
Senior Private Secretary to Sir Andrew Mackenzie	



1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. Andrew Mackenzie welcomed members to the Board meeting and noted apologies. He thanked Board members for a useful discussion and suggestions at the previous day's Board and Executive Committee (ExCo) away day and dinner. A number of questions were discussed in relation to the DSIT allocations commission and will be incorporated into the final response.
- 1.2. He also reiterated that Siobhan Peters, in her capacity as Chief Finance Officer and full Board member will formally cover the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer on behalf of UKRI until Ian Chapman formally takes on the role CEO.
- 1.3. Andrew updated on some of his recent positive engagements since the last Board meeting, including meeting with ministers and officials with interest in the growth mission.

2. a) Minutes of 14 May 2025 UKRI Board meeting; b) Action Log; and c) Forward Schedule

- 2.1. The Board approved the minutes of the 14 May 2025.

DECISION: The Board approved the minutes of 14 May 2025 meeting.

- 2.2. The Board noted the action log and forward schedule. They were satisfied with those proposed to close and progress on open actions.
- 2.3. The Board discussed the forward schedule, including some proposals for future items to be scheduled later in 2025:
 - update on allocations
 - incoming CEO vision and priorities
 - wider research ecosystem and industrial strategies

3. Board Committee Updates

a) Nominations and Remuneration Committee (NomCo)

- 3.1. There was no Nominations and Remunerations Committee in July, but members noted that the succession planning discussions with DSIT for the UKRI Board Chair and two additional Board members with capacity to sit on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) are progressing.

b) Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)

- 3.2. Ruwan Weerasekera, Chair of ARAC, provided an update to the Board, including passing his congratulations to the Finance team and those involved in the Oracle Fusion go-live for successfully laying the UKRI accounts in parallel with launching a new system.
- 3.3. Ruwan has also met with audit committee Chair counterparts at DSIT, UK SBS and Innovate UK Loans.

c) Board Investment Committee (BIC)

- 3.4. Priya Guha, Chair of BIC, provided an update on recent BIC areas of focus, including:
 - involvement in engagement with industry in the lead-up to the publication of the National Infrastructure Roadmap Refresh in November 2025
 - recent deep dives on Artificial Intelligence Research Resource (AIRR) and New Digital Investments
 - scrutiny of the Hartree National Centre for Digital Innovation (HCDNI) business case
 - agreeing a joint approach to risk management between BIC and ARAC



- 3.5. There was discussion of the recent announcement of major government investment for super-computing in Edinburgh, which would be a potential future discussion topic for BIC.

ACTION: the Chairs of BIC and ARAC will have shared the joint framing document setting out their approach to risk management

d) Growth Committee

- 3.6. Nigel Toon, Chair of the Growth Committee, noted that the Committee have had some useful early discussions; and wish to continue to work on their Terms of Reference with the incoming UKRI CEO and Innovate UK CEO as they developed the remit of the committee. The Board approved the interim terms of reference, noting they are provisional and will be reviewed at the end of the year as the remit of the committee becomes more defined.

DECISION: The UKRI Board approved the provisional Growth Committee Terms of Reference.

- 3.7. The Board discussed the importance of being able to holistically consider and prioritise proposals developed by stakeholders, including DSIT. The Growth Committee are working with the Commercialisation team on this and intend to bring back a set of recommendations.
- 3.8. There was also discussion about models to improve the commercialisation of start-up companies and build out expertise.

ACTION: Charlotte Deane, UKRI SRO for Commercialisation, and the Growth Committee will have reviewed the 45 recommendations of the DSIT Integrated Review of Commercialisation and prioritised them ahead of reporting back to the Board in November

4. CEO (Accounting Officer) Update

- 4.1. Siobhan Peters, as interim Accounting Officer, gave an update to the Board, noting the celebration of Ottoline Leyser's time as Chief Executive Officer and the positivity around Ian Chapman's imminent start in this role.
- 4.2. She reflected on the Spending Review discussions from the UKRI Board and Executive Committee away day for the current financial year.
- 4.3. Siobhan reported back on the recent Public Accounts Committee, which she and Ottoline had attended. The message from this, and the National Audit Office (NAO) report [Providing Support Through Grants](#) is the need to take appropriate risk in our investments, with a full understanding of where the risk lies.
- 4.4. Siobhan noted that the Improving Lives and Livelihoods communications plan is now in place, helping UKRI connect with new audiences and tell a more consistent story about the value of research and innovation. Engagement with local government has also been considerably strengthened.
- 4.5. Two key UKRI leadership roles are due to onboard in the next few months:
- the permanent Chief People Officer, alongside other senior HR appointments, to create greater stability in this area.
 - the Chief of Operational Delivery



- 4.6. In terms of Health and Safety, there have been no incidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under RIDDOR during this reporting period; and UKRI met the deadline for response to the STFC Health and Safety Executive improvement notice.

5. CFO Update

5.1. Juliette Meek, UKRI's Finance Director, updated the Board that:

- all three sets of accounts (UKRI, Innovate UK Loans Ltd and the Research Councils' Pension Scheme) were certified and (where appropriate) laid in Parliament on 15 July 2025
- the Operating Expenditure limit for 2025/26 is yet to be set; and while this is not stopping us being able to operate, it does affect manoeuvrability
- Global Staff Mobility (GSM) continues to be managed through incident response to maintain pace and oversight, with an interim policy and guidance in place, plus a communications package for leaders. The board would welcome further discussion on this later in the year.
- an update on the ongoing work regarding the Research Council Pension Scheme will come back to NomCo at a future meeting.
- in terms of organisational change, the Oracle Fusion platform went live, and no critical issues were raised
- the Simpler and Better Funding Programme won the Outstanding Service Design Initiative Award at the Architecture, Change and Service Design Conference Europe 2025, held in London this week

The Board highlighted the significant achievement of launching Oracle Fusion and laying the UKRI Annual Report and Accounts within the same period. The Board wanted their thanks shared with the relevant teams.

ACTION: The Chair will have written to the Finance and Fusion programme teams to express the Board's appreciation of successfully achieving go-live of the new system and laying the UKRI accounts in parallel.

6. UKRI Board Risk Update

- 6.1. Juliette Meek presented the item, noting the overview of the nine Board level principal risks; detailed update on risk deep dives undertaken at Executive Committee; and outcomes of the Annual Accountability Exercise.
- 6.2. She noted that in terms of the Organisational Change risks, the report reflects a point in time of peak anxiety over systems go-live and that there will now be a period of gradual and incremental benefits realisation with a strong focus on a sustainable grants platform going forward.
- 6.3. There were no further questions in relation to the report.

7. UKRI Framework for Performance: Progress and Performance report Q4

- 7.1. Dan Shah introduced the item, with reference to the ongoing conversations with DSIT in relation to objectives and key results (OKRs). He also noted plans to develop a refreshed dashboard model and ongoing work to improve data analysis in key areas.
- 7.2. He flagged two principal areas of concern as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) and grant processing times; and reassured the Board that action is being taken to improve this. Tom Adeyoola will report back on plans for the KTPs. For research grant funding, the new



single system is expected to bring improvement in due course, although there are also challenges in recruiting peer (expert) reviewers. It was noted that a paper on innovation in expert review has previously been presented to the Board, and would be shared with newer members, with a future update scheduled.

7.3. It was also noted that we will review the transparency and publication of UKRI's performance reporting.

7.4. The Board were interested to explore the links between OpEx reductions, new systems implementation and staff satisfaction results, particularly as new systems fully embed; as part of a future discussion on technical programme roadmaps.

ACTION: Tom Adeyoola will have reported back to the Board on the improvement plans in relation to Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)

ACTION: Stian Westlake will have provided an update on the review of Expert Review

ACTION: The CIO will have reported back to UKRI Board on the ongoing technical programme future roadmaps

8. Recommendations from the joint UKRI-DSIT research commercialisation assessment

8.1. Charlotte Deane introduced the item, noting that DSIT and UKRI had jointly reviewed and made recommendations to the Executive Committee on UKRI's early commercialisation support and funding, in terms of Research England, the Research Councils, and Innovate UK's activity. The Board are asked to comment on how these can be sensibly implemented.

8.2. It was stated that the aim would be to see all Councils work towards getting to a minimum percentage level of their overall budgets for commercialisation spend in time, acknowledging that they are at different starting points. This is strongly supported by the development of a single front door, and a much more linked up system that empowers the Councils to collaborate, share knowledge and learning and make joined up decisions.

8.3. The Board discussion raised the importance of:

- supporting a culture of innovation and commercialisation within research, from the earliest stages
- ensuring join-up with the government growth mission; DSIT plans for growing and scaling Science and Technology companies; and creating entrepreneurial career paths for academics
- being able to qualitatively and quantitatively measure the outcomes of this work
- harmonisation and collaboration within UKRI

9. Right-shaping UKRI's portfolio

9.1. Dan Shah introduced the item, noting that this is a complex and significant piece of work which looks to balance fixed elements of UKRI's cost base against the need to be more flexible in managing this going forward. There are three main elements to this work:

9.2. **Institutes:** Anne Ferguson-Smith described the broad range of Institute investments made by UKRI, with diverse funding and governance models. UKRI is working collaboratively to empower these organisations to build a joined-up narrative, supported by data, on their strategic importance as national capabilities. Often UKRI investment represents only a part-



contribution to a much larger national capability; and that there is now an opportunity to capture, quantify and plan ahead, working with DSIT and other parts of Government.

- 9.3. **Infrastructure:** Adam Staines noted the importance of well-targeted regional investment in infrastructure; and the need to balance new investment with ensuring the sustainability of current facilities.
- 9.4. **International:** it was noted that there are many parties involved in international investment decisions, and that diplomatic and relationship factors will play a significant role here. UKRI has an important role in providing scientific advice, working closely with DSIT.
- 9.5. In all cases, it was noted that any transformations in these types of investments are long-term; and that it is important to understand the consequences of any decisions made.
- 9.6. Alexandra Jones noted that DSIT strongly support this work, including how it can help UKRI connect with other parts of Government and noting the need for careful joint management and transparency around the process.
- 9.7. Siobhan Peters reiterated the resource and support that will be needed to work through changes; and the need to ensure that risks are identified and managed.
- 9.8. The Chair welcomed the work, noting the complexity of the challenges being addressed and encouraged the Executive Committee to clearly identify where the UKRI Board can add value and provide advice.

ACTION: The Chief of Investment Planning and Strategy will return to the Board with a sharper focus on where Board advice is needed, following engagement with Executive Committee,

10. AOB

- 10.1. Poli Stuart-Lacey provided a short reflection on communications and external affairs, including identifying the need for strong proactive communications. Poli highlighted some of the ongoing work in the External Affairs and Communication team, including developing a Brand Strategy and focussing on understanding our audience and why we need public support, government confidence and a motivate workforce. The Board noted the need for an audience-centric comms strategy.
- 10.2. The Board welcomed the development of a strong brand strategy, in particular focussing on the need to highlight 'one UKRI'.
- 10.3. The Board noted it would welcome regular verbal updates from Poli, with a more formal update coming to Board for discussion at the end of the year.
- 10.4. The Board approved the following:
 - UKRI Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy
- 10.5. The Board noted the following:
 - UKRI Finance Update
 - UKRI Annual Health and Safety Report
 - UKRI Senior Appointments and Succession Update
 - King's Birthday 2025 honours and award nomination summary
 - Audit and Risk Assurance Committee minutes – 7 April 2025



UK Research and Innovation

- Board Investment Committee minutes – 20 April 2025
- UKRI Executive Committee minutes
 - 29 April 2025
 - 20 May 2025
- Growth Committee minutes
 - 3 April 2025
 - 13 May 2025

11. Non-Executive Session