

### Minutes of REAC meeting 16 May 2018

**Action:** For information

The first meeting of REAC on 28 February had an exhaustive agenda that we continued to follow at the 16 May meeting:

- i Introductions
- ii Minutes of the meeting of 28 February 2018
- iii Quality Board Annual Conference – 15 May 2018
- iv Developing guidance for using the Handbook
- v. Management of information – the development of a CRIS suitable for Icelandic HEIs.
- vi The core model of evaluation of research management
- vii Key questions: the nature of outputs and impact
- ix AOB
- x Any outcomes of this meeting and actions to be taken before the next
- xi Future meetings

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(i & ii) Done and agreed.

(iii) We had a positive discussion about the previous day's Annual Conference, its interest and value.

(iv) Brief discussion around developing guidance for the research elements of subject level review, for which there is nothing systematic available. This is with the Quality Council.

There was later discussion about REAC considering creating guidance for subject review. The creation of a culture of knowledge exchange is what lies behind the international drive for an "impact agenda" and it's important for Icelandic institutions to use the same sorts of language as others do in dealing with impact. Creating commentaries to be used in relation to the unalterable text of the QEF2 handbook might be helpful.

(v) Discussion about the CRIS system: how might we encourage the process of purchase and development, noting that even after procurement and purchase, it will take time to install and to train staff in its use.

(vi & vii) What guidance we might give to academic units around the core model? Discussion centered on impact, a difficult term because it is so often used in conversational English.

We looked at international definitions of impact, notably that of UKRI, a major driver of global practice. They define impact as the *demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy*. We unpacked this, identifying three categories (with categories 2 and 3 collected together as knowledge exchange).

(1) **Research activity** – producing outputs of all sorts, depending on discipline – academic papers, monographs, objects and artefacts, whatever. Disciplines know what their research outputs are.

(2) **Public engagement** – talking to people outside academia as part of outreach from institutions as well as inviting the world outside to come in. TV and radio broadcasts, websites, talks and lectures, conversations with industry or policy makers: again, the list is endless. This however is not in-and-of-itself impact. It may lead to impact, but it is not it.

(3) **Impact is demonstrable change to society and the economy** both taken in a broad sense. The difficulty is measurement, which we began to talk about but did not conclude.

To illustrate the relationships between the three categories we talked about the ubiquitous Professor Brian Cox. An excellent academic with high quality research papers – box 1; which led to him being invited to engage the public through TV programmes – box 2; which have had impact through spin-off book sales, a demonstrable change in buying behavior – box 3.

There was recognition that, while it's not being captured, universities are doing a lot especially in regard to public engagement. The degree to which that can be further developed as impact is uncertain, but there is an existing culture of knowledge exchange that needs to be crystalized out rather than created out of nothing.

PW

18 August 2018