

COU14D051

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Author: Professor David Richardson, Vice-Chancellor
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Admissions position (Confidentiality status: confidential for 12 months)

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League Tables (Confidentiality status: Open)

The University's position in the Guardian leagues table fell from 14th to 20th. This was partly impacted by a significant fall in the "spend per student" metric which the Guardian calculates in a different manner to the other league table compilers. Investigations into the reason for this drop in reported spend are ongoing and will be reported to the next meeting of ET-R. It primarily relates to a reclassification of the amount the University spends on bursaries from a spending head that counted for the Guardian to one that did not.

Learning and Teaching (Confidentiality status: Open)

The PVC-Academic has been working with Academic Directors, Head of LTS and Associate Deans Learning & Teaching to examine the structure of the academic year for 2016-17 onwards. As a result of the implementation of the New Academic Model reforms agreed in 2011, reducing the summer assessment period from 6 weeks to 4 weeks, in two steps over the 2015/16 and 2016/17 period, means that two weeks in the academic year are 'freed up' for additional activities to support student learning and employability without complicating the delivery of core teaching activities. For the 2015/16 academic year, the assessment period will be reduced from 6 weeks to 5 weeks. Teaching will end after week 12 in Semester 2 and there will be a week (Week 13) with no teaching before examinations start. Although this might be considered a 'revision' week, it will also provide a space in the timetable for transition events to prepare continuing students for the next stage of their courses that will commence the following autumn, and other events to support careers and employability. By mid-autumn 2015, the University will need to decide how best to utilise the further 'saved' week from 2016-17 academic year onwards. After giving consideration to five 'induction or employability days' in Semester 1, the current focus is on a break week in the middle of Semester 2 (Week 7). The structure of the academic year excites a lot of interest among staff, but this reform is a useful opportunity to enhance our provision and support for students' learning and employability.

Research (Confidentiality status: open except as marked below)

UEA had 750 responses to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey which ran from 2 March to 14 May, giving an excellent response rate of 58%, well ahead of sector norms. Full analysis of the results will be done over the next two months and action plans will be drawn up by Schools and Faculties to ensure that the feedback contributes to building a better student experience and research community for all of our postgraduate research students.

The Norwich Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership funded by BBSRC has been awarded a further 9 doctoral studentships per annum across the Norwich Research Park to be allocated explicitly to collaborative industrial CASE-type studentships. The present national iCASE competition for individual studentships will cease. BBSRC is due to visit the DTP in mid-June for its annual visit.

A series of review meetings have been held with all Faculties to identify and agree potential impact case studies. A target number of case studies was set for each School based on the ATR FTE as at December 2014 plus 50% to facilitate 100% submission of ATRs (including any growth ahead of the next REF) and to allow for slippage on cases where suitable impact does not materialise as expected or hoped for. The target for UEA as a whole is ~200 case studies. As a result of these review meetings, 3 of the 4 Faculties have already identified the target number of case studies and work is ongoing in HUM to identify the remaining 10 impact case studies required. A range of financial and administrative support has been put in place to aid development of case studies.

The School Research Strategy Review Panel meetings started with the Law Panel meeting on 26 May. By 31 July, the Panels for 9 Schools will have met with the remaining Panels meeting in the period 29 September to 3 December. The purpose of these Panels is to provide guidance on the development and implementation of a strategic plan for research in each School. Each Panel is being chaired by the PVC RE and includes at least one external assessor as well as the ADR and another academic from within the Faculty. A short report from each Panel will be prepared soon after the review and will be available to the School and sent to the VC.

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Enterprise (Confidentiality status: open)

On 25 June the Forum in Norwich will host UEA in the City: A Festival of Student Research, to which business professionals and members of the public are invited. This event includes the "PGR Showcase 2015: from Superheroines to the Matrix" where students will be showcasing their research to the general public at the following events

- 10.30am - 4pm, The Atrium. Students will present their research through visually engaging posters and be on hand to explain their projects.
- 1 - 5pm, The Curve, Pecha Kucha presentations. Students will have just six minutes and twenty slides to explain their research in a way that anyone can understand.

The Norwich Research Park Translational Fund that supports the commercialisation of research has nearly completed its first year of providing grants. The £1.8million fund has been created with financial contributions from all of the NRP partners, the local authorities and match funding from the BBSRC. The fund supports projects in any discipline that have the potential to create commercial or societal impact from the Norwich Research Park research and clinical base. From the first three funding rounds 17 projects have been supported with nearly half of the fund allocated. Projects funded have ranged from the social and economic benefit of bringing medieval churches back into use within communities to improved approaches for the accurate diagnosis of prostate cancer. In addition to supporting specific projects the fund is also helping support the culture of developing impact from research projects.

Student experience (Confidentiality status: open)

The 2015 Student Experience Survey has been completed. This is an internal survey of non-final year students which maps closely onto the National Student Survey and allows us to track new and emerging concerns among our students ahead of the NSS. This year, the survey highlight some key areas for improvement around organisation and management and support for personal and professional development. Some of these were discussed at the University Policy Half Day on 3rd June and the survey findings as a whole will be discussed at Senate and Learning & Teaching Committee and action plans to tackle areas of concern will be put in place.

Partnerships (Confidentiality status: open)

The University hosted a visit by the INTO Regional Directors on 16th & 17th June. The Regional Directors are responsible for INTO's global recruitment network. It was the first time they had visited UEA as a group since 2008. The key message we wished to emphasise was the extent to which the university has developed, both physically, but also in reputation, since 2008.

Higher Education Landscape/the National Picture (Confidentiality status: open)

The public funding environment continues to be challenging and colleagues will be aware that the Chancellor is due to make a second budget announcement on 8 July. Higher Education is not one of the protected departments and it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in funding made available. There is no information at the moment on where these cuts will fall.

Faculty of Medicine and Health (Confidentiality status: confidential for one year)

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Faculty of Science (Confidentiality status: open)

The Faculty of Science is launching a number of new degree programmes for 2016, including a suite of degrees for the BA and BSc in Geography out of the School of Environmental Sciences.

The School of Mathematics and School of Computing Sciences are each launching a Year in Industry variant to their existing degree portfolio (BSc in Mathematics and BSc in Computer Graphics, Imaging and Multimedia). All Schools in Science now offer at least one degree programme each with a placement opportunity embedded within it.

In collaboration with the University's careers service, Science has awarded sixteen, six week funded summer internships spread across its schools, ten of which qualified for widening participation support. In all we received 122 applications spread across 80 students.

In collaboration with the Tyndall Centre, Dr Parv Suntharalingham (ENV) has been awarded £443k from the EU (Coordinated Research in Earth Systems and Climate: Experiments, knowledge, Dissemination and Outreach - CRESENDO. This award comes under the umbrella of a consortium agreement between the University of Leeds (the coordinator) and UEA, but also involving other UK HEI's as well as both national and multi-national organisations.

Other awards include:

- Prof Manfred Bochmann (CHE): SABIC metallocene research, SABIC Global Technologies BV, ~£82k
- Prof David Russell (CHE): Glyconanoparticle diagnostics for the detection and discrimination of human and avian influenza infection, BBSRC, ~£83k
- Dr Aram Saeed (PHA): NRP transitional funding, ~£51k

All Schools in Science have completed their inter-school research away days, and the first research review meeting, chaired by PVC-R, Prof D Petley, in PHA has taken place. This has proved to be very constructive.

On the 18th Prof Matt Gage (BIO), has a paper titled "sexual selection protects against extinction" accepted by Nature, which was subsequently published on line on the 18th May 2015. Whilst Prof Gage was lead corresponding author, the paper also included contributions from a number of collaborators including Dr Brent Emerson and Prof Tracey Chapman.

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nature14419.html>