

Press release: Dr Ruth McKernan announces she will leave her post at Innovate UK

During her three years in post, Dr McKernan has led Innovate UK through an extensive programme of work transforming the organisation and positioning it for a successful transition to UK Research and Innovation on 1 April 2018.

Ruth has been instrumental in establishing a clear plan for the organisation, particularly accelerating the growth of small to medium sized enterprises, with the introduction of both the investor accelerator and the innovation loans pilot programmes, and the development of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to help more UK businesses take advantage of emerging technologies.

She has also been a champion for diversity within innovation and during her tenure the 'Women in Innovation' campaign has seen applications from women rise from 14% to 20% in one year.

Dr Ruth McKernan said:

It has been a pleasure to work for Innovate UK since early 2015 and I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished during this time. The introduction of UK Research and Innovation is the natural transition point and an opportunity for a new leader to refine the organisation, and continue to drive business innovation in the UK.

Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Jo Johnson said:

I would like to thank Ruth on behalf of the department for her dedicated service to Innovate UK. Ruth has implemented a substantial change programme, improving the structures and processes of the organisation while continuing to drive the benefits of innovation across the UK.

The focus on supporting and growing UK businesses will be continued as we move towards the launch of UK Research and Innovation next year to ensure the UK remains the destination of choice for research and innovation.

Sir Mark Walport, Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation said:

It has been a tremendous pleasure to work with Ruth, who has been

an excellent leader of Innovate UK. Ruth has been an excellent supporter of UK Research and Innovation and has worked closely on its design and delivery. She is leaving Innovate UK well prepared for its future as a key part of UKRI. I would like to thank Ruth particularly for her contribution to the development of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will be launching a recruitment campaign for a successor to Dr McKernan, and the first Executive Chair of Innovate UK, shortly.