



GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

**York Graduate Research School
Awards and Funding Sub-Committee**

Thursday 9 September 2021, 12.00pm

Via video-conference

MINUTES

- Present:** Dr K Arnold (KA, Chair, Dean of YGRS)
Prof J Finch (JF, Deputy Director of the HRC, on behalf of Prof R Ogden)
Dr D Martin (DM, Deputy Director of ReCSS, Social Sciences)
Prof S Thompson (ST, Associate Dean for Research in Sciences)
- In attendance:** Miss G Kirk (GK, Secretary, PGR Administration)
Dr J James (JJ, PGR Quality Support Officer, Academic Quality Team)

20-21/31 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Dr Daryl Martin who has been newly invited to attend the Awards and Funding Sub-Committee as the deputy to Professor Yvonne Birks.

Apologies were received from:

Mrs A Grey (Research Strategy and Policy Manager)
Prof R Ogden (Associate Dean for Research, Arts and Humanities, Director of the HRC)
Prof M Ruth (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research)
Prof Y Birks (Associate Dean for Research, Social Sciences)
Dr R Grant (Planning Officer)
M Hughes (Planning Officer)

20-21/32 Minutes from last meeting (March 2021)

The Minutes of the previous meeting in March were approved by the Committee.

20-21/33 Matters arising

a) COVID-19 funding extensions [KA]

The Chair noted that CPSF Round 3 saw an increased volume of applications with 121 eligible applications from both funded and self-funded PGRs, with 87 of these being funded this round. A significant proportion of total applications were from international self-funded students, due to the eligibility criteria changing between the second and third rounds. Home self-funded students will receive a refund of 3 months' FTE Home fees (2020-21 rate) and International self-funded students will receive a lump sum maintenance award of equivalent value to 3 months' FTE Home fees (2020-21 rate).

The majority of funded students have funding end dates post-September 2021 and have extenuating personal circumstances which has meant that mitigation for the academic impact of the pandemic has been even more of a challenge. A CPSF funding extension does not automatically extend the submission deadline and so those funded are reminded that this requires a separate application to Research Special Cases Committee.

The final call opened on 23 August and the criteria have again been extended to now include sponsored International students who have had a request for further funding denied (and can provide evidence of this) and a further comms drive has taken place to ensure students realise they can submit a further application if they have continuing or new grounds. Application numbers are expected to be high.

b) Support for self-funded students

As above, self-funded PGRs, including international PGRs, may apply to CPSF for support, as well as the Writing Up+ Fund that was open until the end of May and many took (and are taking) advantage of these schemes.

c) UKRI funding for international PhD students

Application numbers across the various DTPs were at record highs due to change in eligibility though the competitions ran generally smoothly.

As an example of impact, the WRoCAH Competition saw 534 applications (up from 289 in 2020), of which:

Home: 315 (59%)

International: 216 (40%)

ACTION: PGRA to email CDTs/DTPs to confirm the same process will continue in 2021/22 competitions with regard to fee waivers (with Departments covering the fee differential for successful International PGRs).

ST flagged the process whereby the fees for University match-funded PGRs, where an International PGR is recruited, are covered by the RDF, so the PVC-R has oversight for consistency and decision-making, however there are concerns that this process is not fully embedded yet and the RDF management processes are currently under review.

ACTION: KA to pick up match-funding for international PGRs with Rachel Curwen.

d) PGR scholarships database

There is no major update to report on this. General support for a Business Analyst has been approved, but the project is in the pipeline awaiting prioritisation. Susanna Broom, Assistant Registrar: PGR and Financial Support, is continuing to push to keep this on the agenda.

e) CITY College

Networking events were held for the four corresponding departments across CITY College and York: Computer Science, Language and Linguistic Science, Management and Psychology. Conversations offline between supervisors at the two institutions culminated in several PhD proposals, which were advertised online with an aim to recruit a number of PhDs for the 2021/22 academic year with 50% co-supervision between CITY and York. Nine applications were received, seven of which were supported by supervisors and six have been shortlisted for interviews, taking place w/c 23 August. The expectation is to end up with three or four candidates, though there are only three scholarships so it depends if funding can be found from elsewhere.

20-21/34

YGRS Overseas Research Scholarships

The Chair noted that, because we have had such success with the changes to the rules on UKRI allowing International candidates to be funded, she has proposed that the YGRS Overseas Research Scholarships (ORS) budget be repurposed to meet another strategic priority of the University, which is to increase the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic PGRs that we have at York, This budget would instead provide up to six fully funded scholarships per year to be awarded to self-identifying BAME candidates who show academic potential through a scholarship selection process.

This proposal has not yet received formal approval, however the draft paper was shared with the Committee for their comments.

Views were generally positive. The Committee agreed that, even if the scholarships are split evenly across the three faculties, the competition should be handled centrally. Appropriate advice will be taken from the EDI team to ensure any communications and language around this will be sensitively and appropriately framed.

DM recommended the Stuart Hall Foundation as an exemplary source to refer to in terms of wording for this type of initiative.

20-21/35

Governance of YGRS Committees

The way YGRS is currently structured and how it is governed is under review to ensure the right Committees have the right membership and decisions are being taken in the right places.

A paper is being circulated with a proposal for how governance might change, which is against the backdrop of the fact the University's higher level governance structure is currently being worked on as well.

JJ outlined current issues around long reporting lines, duplication of effort and missed opportunities;

for example, there is no governance oversight for some areas we want to address.

YGRS Board is sometimes making decisions on operational matters when it should be focused on the big picture issues. On the funding side, there are gaps, for example in CDTs and DTPs, there are big decisions being made without the same level of scrutiny as some other areas of funding. AFSC is missing representation from Research and Enterprise and Marketing and Recruitment so there is a sense that there could be a more joined up approach.

The new committee structure was presented to the Committee who agreed it was a much clearer rationale, with good complementarity between the committees.

ST recommended having some additional academic representation on the committees if they are going to have more teeth, for example some Graduate Chairs. JJ agreed and noted it had been identified that there was a lower representation from departments than might be expected and in comparison to UG or PGT committees.

ACTION: JJ to document membership and remit of the committees, as well as ideas around the annual cycles of business.

20-21/36 Faculty updates

a) Arts and Humanities [Jon Finch]

York has been successful in receiving renewed funding from the Wolfson Foundation for a tenth Cohort of scholars for 2022/23.

b) Sciences [Sarah Thompson]

All is delayed from the research councils and it is unclear when we will hear about the EPSRC DTP. An announcement was expected early Autumn around the future of CDTs. The Annual Report the EPSRC expects institutions to submit is proving very burdensome in terms of the data we are expected to collect and collate.

c) Social Sciences [Daryl Martin]

The ESRC recommissioning of the White Rose DTP is on the agenda but updates in that regard will be provided in future meetings.

ACTION: Once more settled into the role, DM to update AFSC on admissions and plans for ReCSS moving forward.

20-21/37 Any other business

ST asked about the timeline for feedback from the Office for Students on the BAME bid. The Chair confirmed it was pushed back from August to now be due by the end of September.

The Chair also notified the committee that she is raising with the PVC-R the issue around admin costs associated with CDTs and DTPs as there are big differences across research councils as to how this is dealt with. The institution can be left quite exposed in terms of the amount of investment we need to put in and either no money comes from the funder for it or the PI hasn't budgeted for it in the bid (or in their match-funding application to the RDF).

Category II Business**20-21/39 Chair's actions:**

a) New agreements since last meeting:

Ref.	Date agreed / notified:	Staff member / department	Application details / project title	Support agreed	Expected start
AFSC/20-21	21/07/21	Piran White / Environment & Geography	NERC CDT proposal on Sustainable UK Marine Management	Requested from RDF: 6 x 25% studentships (fees plus stipend 3.5 years) and associated research training and support costs totalling £117,122 Studentship balance: 6 x 50% charged to NERC, 6 x 25% charged to Departments	Oct 2022