

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Matters for note by Senate arising from the meeting of Research Committee on 16 March 2022

1. Proposed plans for the release of REF results

The Committee received an oral report on the proposed plans for the release and analysis of the REF 2021 results in May 2022. The following points were noted:

- (a) A communications group involving departmental leads would be set up by the REF Planning Working Group. The Committee requested that the call for nominations be recirculated in order to have the widest possible reach. Templates would be prepared in advance to enable departments to quickly prepare their results for public dissemination. The Communications team would use national-level data prepared by REF to understand which formats of dissemination worked best, as well as involving colleagues and practitioners from across the institution.
- (b) The Committee suggested that space for department-level reflection on results be built into the process, including notifying HoDs of results in advance of group briefings. It was recognised that reflection on REF results would continue in the long-term following publication, and that in-depth analysis would take place over time.

2. Rights Retention Policy

The Committee approved proposals for the rights retention policy. It was beneficial for the University to align with other N8 institutions. Further advice would be needed in order to implement such a policy, however this was easier to seek as part of a coordinated response. It was essential that researchers be empowered to make informed choices, and effective briefing materials articulating the rights and responsibilities of researchers would assist in this.

The Committee recommended that insight be sought from colleagues with editorial roles at journals in order to get a sense of what they are aware of and any further support needed. Further discussion concerning the applicability of the proposals to PGR students would be picked up outside the meeting.

3. Oral report on T&S staff access to PURE accounts

The Committee received an oral report on T&S staff access to PURE accounts, noting that this was a complex and long-standing issue. Colleagues in Teaching & Learning were aware of the issue and a review of promotions criteria was underway currently. The Committee acknowledged the importance of supporting action in this area and remaining up to date with developments. Further discussion would be brought to the Committee as relevant. The Policy on Staff Groups Seeking to Engage with Research Activities would need to be updated following more widescale change. The Committee emphasised the importance of the situation for many colleagues across the institution, especially in terms of career development.

4. Five Year Forecast

The Committee reviewed the draft Five-Year Forecast for the University. The following points were noted:

- (a) The paper provided an early indication of the five-year forecast, with a full forecast due to be completed in early-May. The forecast was developed in a bottom-up manner, building on Department-level forecasts. The Committee noted that the forecast was positive, and recommended that consideration be given as to the most effective communication of the core messages.

- (b) Changes to the forecast were possible. The current figures did not include changes in EU or industry funding, nor did they account for changes as part of the Transformational Initiatives arising from the University Strategy.
- (c) The Committee noted that it was important to remain aware of the pressures on time faced by colleagues. It was clarified that the forecast was used as an indicator for benchmarking.

5. Other Business

- (d) The University Sustainability Strategy had been approved in principle by Council. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Council and UEB would consider next steps in due course, with the intent of developing an ambitious approach consisting of real behavioural change, and it was acknowledged that such work would focus on wider factors such as water use and waste management. It was noted that the environmental impact of research was increasingly considered by funders (in particular health funders). The Committee recognised that the cost of implementing sustainability efforts may place further pressure on researchers; this would be considered going forwards. Plans would be presented to URC for information in due course.
- (e) The transformational initiatives continued to be developed, and a paper would shortly be presented to UEB to outline a business case for supporting these.
- (f) The Universities Minister had made further information available concerning support for Ukrainian refugees, families and academics, including visa extensions. Detail was available on the Russell Group website. The York Graduate Research School had reached out to students and colleagues affected by the Russo-Ukrainian war and put appropriate support in place. A co-ordinated approach for wellbeing and hardship would deal with each instance on a case-by-case basis.
- (g) The recently completed Annual Programme Review and postgraduate survey had both been useful in identifying themes for YGRS to focus on over the next year. The UKRI New Deal for PGRs was in train, with responses to a current consultation due by mid-May. The consultation for the New Deal was rather broad, and so YGRS would focus their response on the most relevant activity areas to the institution.
- (h) The Committee Terms of Reference would be updated to remove the York Graduate Research School Board, which now reported directly to Senate. Minutes would continue to come to URC for information.
- (i) The Committee approved the Terms of Reference for the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee (CTSC), subject to some minor changes and amendments. It was recommended that the membership of CTSC be broadened in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest. It was also suggested that a summary accompany the Terms of Reference, noting the responsibilities of the Committee and its specific remit with respect to research. The CTSC continued to consider the potential for the University acting as sole sponsor of CTIMPs – a paper would come to URC when appropriate.
- (j) A new process for the managing of complex bids was noted. Further details would be available in the slides associated with the report.
- (k) In keeping with a growing interest in translational research and industrial engagement within the Faculty of Sciences, the Department of Computer Science had completed its re-organisation of its research around nine groups with cross-cutting industry-oriented themes. Elsewhere in the Faculty, planning was underway for the future of the Assuring Autonomy International Programme, with a transition to Assuring Autonomy in Practice. The two 'Technologies for the Future' Research Theme Champions would take forward work to establish the University's position on data science, machine learning and AI. A number of grant successes and awards were reported.
- (l) In the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, funding from the World Health Organisation for the Centre for Global Health History had been reconfirmed until 2025. The AHRC IAA bid submitted by the HRC had not been successful and so the YIAF would continue to support the Centre. DC Labs had initiated a

digital surgery for grant applications, offering support across the Faculty. The 'From Researcher to Research Leader' programme was underway, but had been delayed somewhat due to strike action.

- (m) In support of the institutional aim of being a University public good, the Place and Community Initiative continued to work with local groups, such as Yorkshire Museum. A recent event, with poetry, talks, film and photography, as part of LGBT History Month had been well-received.
- (n) The Committee recommended for approval the proposed revisions to the Code of Practice on Research Integrity. The Code would be presented to Senate and to the YGRS Policies and Programmes Subcommittee.
- (o) An update would be presented at the May meeting of URC as to the sharing of data with colleagues in Faculties and Departments. The Committee noted that funders were developing tools which would enable funding decision panels to see in greater detail the breakdown of direct and indirect costs; conversation on this count would be picked up outside the meeting.

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26/04/2021

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