U N I V E R S I T Y O F Y O R K

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Matters for note by Senate arising from the meeting of Research Committee on 21 June 2023

1. **Items circulated for approval via written resolution**

The following items were circulated following the meeting for consideration and/or approval via written resolution:

a. URC Plan and Priorities for 2023/24
b. University Research Committee Data Reporting Group
c. Pure Development Plan for 2023/24
d. Annual Statement on Research Integrity

The papers were approved and/or endorsed as relevant, and a minute detailing the written resolution process would be submitted to the upcoming meeting of the Committee in September 2023.

2. **Viking2 Transition**

The Committee considered a paper outlining proposals for the transition from Viking to Viking 2. The paper had been prepared on short notice to adapt to the changing situation and the recent spike in energy costs. It was suggested that Viking be scaled down to 50% of the current offering, with the IT budget increased to cover extra charges; this would not require the prioritisation of users. The Committee gave its endorsement for IT to pursue this solution, noting that specific details regarding the budget needed to be determined.

It was recommended that IT continue to look into other methods of reducing demand, such as enabling access to such systems through funders and agreements with other institutions. Further communications needed to be sent out to researchers, particularly postgraduate researchers, to clarify the issue.

3. **University Research Strategy**

The Committee considered a further draft of the University Research Strategy and discussed proposed success measures and KPIs and a timeline for the completion of the implementation plan. There was a substantial and in-depth discussion of potential success measures, during which it was observed that the purpose of KPIs was not to capture everything, but to enable the identification of trends. It was important to establish what 'good' might look like for each strategic objective, as well as consider how growth could best be measured. For some priorities, such as those relating to impact, it was noted that narrative statements would be the most effective way to assess the depth and strength of research.

In regards to benchmarking, it was noted that the selection of comparator clusters should account for the size of institutions. Whilst it was possible to determine different comparators for each area of University activity (teaching, research, impact and so on), it was recognised that it was not realistic to be top-ranked in all aspects.

The Committee approved of the draft Research Strategy and the proposed next steps for the development of success measures and an implementation plan.

4. **Draft Code of Practice on Sustainability in Research**

The Committee considered a report on the draft Code of Practice on Sustainability in Research, which was intended for launch later in 2023. It was noted that embedding the Code of Practice would require reflection and engagement from researchers and the University as a whole, alongside formal approaches such as incorporating sustainability in the PDR and IDF processes. The Committee requested that the

benefits of in-person events and travel be noted, and also suggested that suppliers be contacted to discuss sustainability practices.

It was emphasised that the Code of Practice would be more reasonably understood as guidance, and the Committee requested that the references to the Research Misconduct Policy & Procedure be removed.

5. Other Business

(a) The difficult financial situation facing the University was noted, as was the sector-wide issues in this regard. Research continued to be a priority and an area in which York excelled. Although recruitment and retention remained an issue in some parts of the research support system, measures were in place to mitigate the challenges as far as possible. The End-to-End review of research support would focus on efficiency and systematic organisation. The Committee had an important role to play in advocating for research.

(b) Concerns regarding financial support were echoed from the Faculties, noting that difficulties in this area would impede the ability of Faculties to deliver on their research strategies.

(c) [redacted]

(d) Work was ongoing with the TRAC team to ensure changes to JES and UKRI roles were accounted for.

(e) A report from Research England about the future of REF had been released, and communication would be sent out on this front shortly.

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30/06/2023