Minutes of the meeting held in Heslington Hall H/G09 at 1500 pm on 5 August 2008

Present: Professor A Fitter (Chair)
         Professor A Tyrrell
         Professor P Sloper
         Professor J Local

In attendance: Dr T Driffield (Secretary)
               Ms G Lindsey (Assistant Registrar: Student Administrative Services)

08/10 Minutes
The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2008.

08/11 Matters Arising – Secretary
The Committee received details of the Chair’s and Secretary’s actions.

The Committee approved a change to the wording for the requirements of external partners contributing to Partner Studentships from ‘must contribute at least 50% of an RCUK stipend’ to ‘are expected to contribute at least 50% of an RCUK stipend’.

The Chair agreed to liaise with the Secretary of Planning Committee to ascertain whether the changes to the application process for Masters Studentships have been approved. (M08/08)

(ACTION: AHF)

08/12 Scholarship Strategy Consultation
The Committee received a paper summarising the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the scholarships strategy consultation. The Committee considered a proposed project plan, issues resulting from the consultation, the statistical results of the prioritisation exercise and a set of scholarship related tools that may aid delivery of the scholarship strategy.

The Committee approved the project plan.
The Committee approved the following potential reasons for the provision of scholarships as priorities that should underpin the University of York Scholarship Strategy:

1. To increase the number and quality of applicants and entrants
2. To increase the number and quality of international applicants and entrants
3. To support, promote and build sustainability of new postgraduate teaching programmes
4. To support, promote and build sustainability of new research areas
5. To develop partnerships with industry and other public and third sector organisations and build knowledge transfer

The Secretary noted that the next stage of the project plan is for the Scholarships Office to draft the Scholarship Strategy based on these five priorities. The Chair noted that the Scholarship Strategy should be discussed at the Graduate Chairs Forum to encourage further feedback.

(ACTION: TD)

The Committee noted interdependencies between some proposed tools and that work elsewhere in the University may have implications for some of the proposed tools. For example the Research and Enterprise Information System may provide useful information on sponsors which may contribute to an internal sponsor webpage. The Committee recommended that the Secretary liaise with Anna Grey from the Research Support Office to understand more about this project.

(ACTION: TD)

The Committee noted that some tools would have monetary implications. The Chair decided that he would consider monetary implications for relevant tools once the tools had been prioritised in terms of their ability to aid delivery the Scholarship Strategy and budget implication have been fully explored.

08/13 Closer Relations with the International Office
The Committee noted that closer relations with the International Office were one tool to aid delivery of the Scholarship Strategy, particularly with reference to Priority Number 2: To increase the number and quality of international applicants and entrants. The Committee noted that to date a representative of the Graduate Awards Committee has attended only in reference to specific agenda items.
The Committee decided to request that a member of the International Office attends Graduate Awards Committee meetings.

(ACTION: TD)

08/14 Scholarships Annual Report
The Committee approved the data within the provisional Scholarships Annual Report for release to Heads of Department, Graduate Chairs and Chairs of Boards of Studies. The Committee noted that the information should be made available on internal scholarship webpages and we should refer Graduate Chairs to this information when releasing the call for studentship for 2009/10 entrants.

(ACTION: TD)

08/15 Advertising Review
The Committee received a verbal update on the advertising review and noted that the Scholarships Officer is reviewing current advertising activities by departments and that Andrea Bourne in Admissions and Schools Liaison is reviewing current advice offered to department. Both elements of the review are being carried out with a view to developing a summary of best advertising practice.

08/16 ORSAS
The Committee noted the announcement by HEFCE that funding for ORSAS is to be phased out. The Committee decided that the Chair should ascertain whether the money would actually be cut from the University or whether, in effect, the budget still existed but was no longer ring-fenced for the provision of scholarships.

The Committee considered the need for a level of support for international students, the need to attract high quality international students, the relative attractiveness of fee waivers and stipends, and the previous high rate of declines from applicants offered ORSAS funding.

The Committee decided it would like to offer three generous studentships. The studentships would offer a full overseas fee-waiver and a £5000 stipend. The ability to offer the fee waiver is subject to approval from Planning Committee that an equivalent increase to the fee-waiver budget is approved. The Committee decided that funding for the stipend would be secured by reducing the available number of teaching studentships from nine to six.

(ACTION: AHF)
The Committee decided that the studentship would be offered under the same eligibility criteria as the ORSAS awards except that the studentships would not be open to current students.

Given the potential implications for international students the Committee decided to approach the International Office to request further monetary support to increase the value of these studentships.

(ACTION: TD)

08/17  Better Management and the implications for the Fee Waiver Budget
The Committee considered the future of the fee waiver budget given the forthcoming Better Management changes. The Committee decided that John Local and the Chair would discuss any implications with David Muckersie, Secretary of Planning Committee and Janet Ford, Vice Chancellor’s Office, and report back to the Committee.

(ACTION: JL, AHF)

08/18  Research Support Grants for University supported studentships
The Committee considered the proposal for University funded students to receive Research Support Grants. They noted that this was not inline with the proposed Scholarship Strategy. The Committee therefore decided not to approve Research Support Grants for University funded students.

08/19  Partner Scheme extended for Masters Students
The Committee considered the proposal for the present Partner studentship scheme to be extended to Master students. They noted that this was an interesting proposal but that the Committee needed further evidence to support the potential benefits outlined in the proposal, and further evidence that this proposal is supported more broadly. The Committee decided that the proposal should be resubmitted by the Graduate Chair in relevant department from which the request originated once additional evidence has been gathered.

08/20  Transfer of Health Sciences Studentships
The Committee approved the transfer of the Masters studentships from the MSc Health Sciences (Health Services Research) to MSc Health Sciences (Generic Pathway).