

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Matters for note by Senate arising from the meeting of Research Committee on 25 November 2020

1. Update on the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The Committee received an update on the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and noted the following:

- (a) The membership of the Concordat Implementation Group had been strengthened and now includes more PIs as well as colleagues from HR and the EDI team. A draft interim action plan is currently being reviewed by the HR Excellence in Research panel. This process had been delayed slightly but the outcome was expected by the start of January.
- (b) Universities UK were considering ways in which the various Concordats currently in operation could be more effectively aligned as part of a larger focus on research culture. The need to engage productively with the consultation and the Concordat itself was recognised. It was requested that the consultation process be streamlined somewhat in the interest of minimising the administrative burden on staff.
Note: Following the meeting the decision was taken to delay this deadline, and feedback is now requested by 26 February.
- (c) It was important that the University makes commitments which are deemed sensible and support performance against key metrics. Actions taken to implement the Concordat would be done through existing University structures, and it was important to consider the impact of new initiatives in terms of staff time.

2. Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC) and the KEC Development Year

The Committee considered a report on the Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC) and the KEC Development Year. This was the first year of the Concordat, and thus was a pilot year. The purpose of the Concordat was to optimise KE activity, not to dictate it. The Committee noted the importance of incorporating such activity into existing ways of working. This would benefit the public good mission of York. The following priority areas were identified: (i) recognition and awards and (ii) evaluating success.

Over the coming weeks a development group would be established with the aim of conducting a self-assessment of the institution against the principles of the Concordat, followed by the establishment of priorities and the development of a York action plan.

3. Initiatives for widening participation within the York Graduate Research School

The Committee discussed initiatives for widening participation within the York Graduate Research School. Current work in this area focused on the development of a concept note regarding the establishment of the Yorkshire Consortium for Equity in Doctoral Education, with a deadline at the end of January.

Further to this, it was important to consider how widening participation efforts could be embedded in the long-term strategy of the University and in partnerships and wider activity. This was an exciting opportunity to diversify the University portfolio and involve a wider range of backgrounds and perspectives.

4. Review of Research Entities: Governance Model 3

The Committee considered a report on the review of Research Entities: Governance Model 3. The following points were noted:

- (a) There was scope to consider how the review process operated. It was noted that the current iteration of the reporting form did not capture discussions about strategy (both at entity- and institutional-level), and that there are no clear metrics against which performance would be measured. The Committee recognised that there were significant differences in the character, structure and purpose of each entity. It was also suggested that the questions on governance did not need to be asked annually. An executive summary at the beginning of the report would be useful in directing members to specific areas of concern. Consideration was necessary as to how the activities of entities aligned with and supported funding decisions across the University.
- (b) It was clarified that further discussion would take place regarding the role of and reporting on Governance Model 1 and 2 entities to assess the effectiveness of the current model.

5. Other Business

- (a) The meeting of the REF Strategy Group on 3 November had included discussion of research income in kind. The autumn REF Check had been completed and feedback would be distributed to departments once the review of outputs was finished. UEB had received an update on REF at its most recent meeting. An update from the REF Director noted relaxed rules on research income in kind and contained guidance on technical requirements regarding the accessibility of documents.
- (b) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Work continued regarding information on collaborative grants, and the data would be shared once available.
- (c) The Committee received an update on the implementation of the Wellcome Trust guidance on DORA and the use of the SCOPE model to assess compliance. The value of SCOPE was noted in that it had DORA embedded into its existing model.
- (d) The Department for Education guidance for higher education institutions with respect to C-19 was still applicable, and members were reminded of resources available on the University webpages.
- (e) The C-19 situation remained challenging for the PGR community, particularly in terms of mental health issues, and the emotional impact on staff was significant. This was exacerbated by announcements from UKRI indicating that funding extensions for PGR students were limited. Work continued on fees for international students.
- (f) Work continued on the University Strategy, and input from the University community was important to this process to ensure plans aligned effectively with other areas of focus and reflected the University commitment to public good.
- (g) Concerns were noted from each Faculty regarding the significant workload faced by staff in keeping their research active and supporting their postgraduates and research associates, particularly arising from teaching requirements. It was important to prioritise tasks, and the Committee recognised that staff would have to focus on the fundamentals (such as UG and PG students, research associates and the upcoming REF). The impact of this differed across staff. It was important to consider where processes could be streamlined.
- (h) Within the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, the HRC Place and Community project had continued, with an online forum with the National Railway Museum, and follow-on workshops planned. Colleagues in the Department of English and Related Literature had established a

Decolonisation Network, and it was positive to see colleagues in the Faculty and beyond engaging with this topic, which was important to the University as a whole.

- (i) Departments such as Management had taken on extra students for 2020/21, which had a knock-on effect in terms of workload which needed to be recognised. Funding calls with a short turnaround time had added extra pressures on staff.
- (j) The Festival of Social Sciences had recently taken place online, and had showcased an excellent range of activities.
- (k) [REDACTED]
- (l) YGRS was in the process of developing initiatives to support the access of BAME students to doctoral study. It was **noted** that the University of York currently had low numbers of BAME students (13% of undergraduate students and 8% of PGR students identified as BAME), and that this was both a specific and sector-wide issue.
- (m) Two external appointments were reported within the Research & Enterprise Directorate. Rukmal Abeysekera (Head of the KTP) had been appointed as Governor to the York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust as a public representative. Dr Karen Clegg (Head of the Research Excellence Training Team) had been appointed to the Executive Committee for Graduate Education (UKCGE).
- (n) The Research Report Writing Working Group had achieved its objective of creating research reports from robust data using the Tableau workbook, and held its final meeting in November. RSPO had submitted a request to the Enterprise Systems Support Group (ESSG) for the necessary business analyst support and developer time to enable a wider range of data for reporting purposes.
- (o) Work continued on Due Diligence within the University, and the Committee was made aware of the recent UUK Guidance on *Managing Risk in Internationalisation: Security Issues*. Further to this, RSPO was in the process of implementing the Trusted Research Guidance from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI). The Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee had held its first meeting.

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