

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Matters for note by Senate arising from the meeting of Research Committee on 3 February 2021

1. Oral update on the University Strategy for 2030

The Committee received an oral update on the development of the University Strategy for 2030. High-level aims for the Strategy had been articulated, and each of these would be supported by a working group chaired by the relevant PVC. These groups would be most effective when populated by colleagues from across the University. Each group would also be accompanied by a 'critical friends' group. Members were invited to inform the Chair of any colleagues they felt would be useful members of such working groups.

2. Implementation of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC) at York

The Committee received a report on the implementation of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC) at York. Further to the information in the paper, the following was noted:

- (a) The aim of the KEC was to facilitate change and the development of Knowledge Exchange activity. It was recognised that some areas could not be addressed until a strong understanding of Knowledge Exchange was in place. An action plan would be developed to fulfil these needs, with an implementation deadline of July.
- (b) The Committee noted that ownership of the Knowledge Exchange area needed to be agreed to ensure the most effective oversight, bearing in mind the importance of the area in upcoming REF cycles. It was currently expected that URC would have a significant role in this.

3. Oral update on the 2021 Annual Departmental Research Review

The Committee approved the suggestion that the ADRR not take place in 2021. The Committee recognised the value of reducing the administrative burden on staff, and noted that this was in line with the decision taken in preparation for the REF submission in 2020 (since delayed) (M.19-20/17).

4. Report on measures announced to help universities complete REF submissions

The Committee considered a report on measures announced to help universities complete REF submissions. A triage system would be used to identify problems during the first technical check, accompanied by an expedited quality check. Following this, a detailed technical check would take place and feedback distributed to departments. The final submission was planned for mid-March. The work of departments in meeting the internal deadline for REF was recognised and the Committee thanked colleagues for their efforts.

5. Report on the Research Information and Reporting project

The Committee considered a report on the RSSG Research Information and Reporting project. The following points were noted:

- (a) The project aimed to bring together research information already held in systems across the University, while also developing a robust data governance framework, led by institutional requirements on reporting in order to best identify needs. The proposed software solution, Alteryx, was currently being trialled by the Business Intelligence Unit (BIU) with support from the Enterprise Systems Steering group and via business-critical funding from the Planning Office.

- (b) The project team was confident that the project would be able to deliver change and improvements in the area of research information and reporting. The importance of building trust in the data was recognised. Initial reporting would focus on institutional and Faculty-level data.

6. Other Business

- (a) The University had been recognised by the European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award. York was one of just five UK universities to have held and retained the award for a decade.
- (b) The Research Contingency Group continued to meet regularly to manage the COVID-19 situation, and would continue to do so in order to ensure alignment with sector-wide and government standards. The Graduate Research School was confident that the necessary interventions were now in place to support PGRs. The first round of awards from the COVID-19 Scholarship Support Fund would be made shortly.
- (c) Work had been initiated on the YGRS Strategy, and an informal consultation process was ongoing. This would be followed by wider communications seeking input from across the University. EDI efforts were particularly emphasised in the Strategy.
- (d) A number of bids and collaborations were reported, including a MRC DiMen DTP bid In Discovery Medicine North, which would be submitted shortly, and an educational and research partnership with CITY College, Thessaloniki. Within the Faculty of Social Sciences, work continued on a large ESRC bid on the future of policing, and on a separate bid looking at multi-morbidity and serious mental illness. In the Arts & Humanities, a workshop with the National Rail Museum, organised as part of the Place & Community project, had generated collaboration opportunities. An upcoming event on slavery would involve the National Rail Museum and other partners. A collaboration was also in development with the Rowntree Society.
- (e) Following the news that the UK would continue to associate with five EU programmes, including Horizon Europe, it was important to encourage researchers to re-engage with EU funding.
- (f) Several funders had announced special concessions for the 2021 Researchfish Data Collection Period (1 February – 11 March). An email communicating these changes, and clarifying that RGO would not monitor submissions, would be sent to departments following URC.
- (g) Feedback from the Impact Conference 2020 highlighted requests for further training in policy engagement. A virtual Impact Conference is planned for November on the theme of “Place”. It was recognised that further steps could be taken to tie impact in with the REF and KEF processes.
- (h) The Committee approved proposed changes to the Terms of Reference of the Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee (AECC) concerning the role of the AECC in overseeing professional services.
- (i) [REDACTED]
- (j) The final internal REF deadline of 29 January had been successfully met within Faculties, and thanks were extended to colleagues across departments and within RSPO for their work.

PROFESSOR MATTHIAS RUTH
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