York Graduate Research School  
Awards and Funding Sub-Committee  

Monday 19 June 2017, 10.00am  

H/G/17  

MINUTES

Present:  
Prof T Stoneham (Chair) (TS)  
Mr A Brown (AB)  
Prof M Festenstein (MF)  
Dr K Giles (KG)  
Mrs A Grey (AG)  

In attendance:  
Miss G Kirk (GK)  

16-17/34  
Apologies:  
Mrs S Broom, Prof C Brown, Mr D Lean, Prof D Smith, Mrs S Mountain & Mr S Willis  

16-17/35  
Minutes from last meeting [Encl. 1]  
The minutes from April’s meeting were approved by the Committee as an accurate record.  

Overseas Research Scholarships (ORS):  

KG requested an ORS update following the last meeting’s note that these would be added to the budget from 2018/19 entry. TS plans to meet with GK, who shadowed the ORS shortlisting committee meeting the previous week, to discuss an enhanced process for these scholarships under YGRS, with less emphasis on students’ personal statements and the solicitation of departmental support in a consistent format.  

ACTION: GK to arrange meeting with TS to further discuss ORS.  

16-17/36  
Matters arising:  

1) Update on AHRC DTP2  

TS reported that costings have been worked out at £764,000 per cohort as a maximum (21 per cohort) and £660,000 per cohort as a minimum (if 16 per cohort). TS and DS will take a paper to UEB
in August regarding how to finance this. York’s additional costs over and above the other White Rose partners are, at a maximum, £230,000 per year. It was noted how eye-wateringly large these figures are and there was concern about how the sector in general, not just York, would afford these costs.

2) PGR programme approval process

TS has included this in the strategy update, noting that planning approval remains a problem, and passed this back to UEB.

3) Leverhulme update

TS confirmed that three were interviewed following the selection process and, of those, Digital Heritage was chosen, led by Julian Richards and Helen Petrie. TS should be imminently receiving a draft of that bid to provide some feedback to Julian prior to submission; otherwise there are very minimal requests for support from him. To top up the Leverhulme funding (for 15 students) to the level of WRoCAH students, £80,000 will be provided from the AFSC budget.

4) MA in Social Research update

MF reported that this programme is seeing significant numbers: there are 66 applicants with a number of live offers. There is still some set-up required and some modules are currently going through the approval process but all should converge in good time for the first intake, with the aim of providing a model to fill in some training gaps, especially at doctoral level.

5) Update on Doctoral Training for Advanced Health Practitioners and Nurses

Draft MoUs are with DS. TS reported that the proposal is that students will keep their nursing jobs at 0.4 FTE and will spend 0.6 FTE as full time PhD students. There are various funding models depending on what resource comes from Health Education England. If the University receives nothing, we will be looking to find both a fee waiver and a £6,000 per year stipend per student, however the best case scenario is that we are only asked for a fee waiver and the stipend is covered by HEE. The aim is to have MoUs signed by July so they can advertise at the end of July for a January start. The biggest issue, rather than the funding aspect, is likely to be alignment with the University’s Policy on Research Degrees.

16-17/37 Scholarship Budget update [Encl. 2]

GK reported that 2016’s budget was largely unchanged except for the removal of the ESRC set-up costs. The Conference Fund was underspent despite approval of all bids in the latest round of applications.

The Committee noted updates to 2017/18:

- We have a Fulbright student for 2017/18 on an MA in Post-War Recovery Studies.
- The six YuFund scholarships have been awarded.
- The NERC renewal call for the DTP is expected soon.
- We do not have a Marshall scholar for 2017/18 so this can be removed from the budget.
- One WR Network is going to the ESRC DTP, one to BBSRC DTP2 and two will be rolled over to be deployed in 2018/19 and 2019/20 respectively as agreed between Craig Walker and Jonathan Stokoe via AFSC earlier in the year.

In 2018/19, the only new commitment is James Chong’s bid which is a large national collaboration at
York, despite not being awarded the scholarship.

In 2019/20 we do not yet have any new commitments. This will be the first year of AHRC DTP2. The proposal that went to UEB was that departments budget for a third of the cost of their historic number of studentships into their MTPs to cover the cost of match funding. However, if departments achieve numbers above that, they receive match funding from AFSC so their MTPs are not thrown out and they are incentivised to overperform. MF asked what happens to the YGRS matched element if they underperform (does YGRS pick up the budget). TS stated this is a decision for UEB. MF noted the need to define the principles of match funding for greater levels of consistency across DTPs.

**ACTION: GK to keep better track of WR Networks going forward.**

**16-17/38 YGRS Conference Fund**

Update

This has been running for two years. The first year was reasonably successful though this year the budget is significantly underspent, even after a push ahead of the second funding round, which received six applications. TS discussed this in Research Forum back in April and there was a strong steer that they would like this to be made available for not just conference but other research training activity.

Review of procedure and application form [Encl. 3 and 4]

The suggestion is that it is effectively run like RTSG for self-funded students. TS suggested bidding rounds for September and March rather than December and May. It was decided to allow it to cover research training activities such as attendance at conferences, training courses or summer schools or similar events held either in or outside the UK. Funding for consumables, equipment and additional subsistence (i.e. not included in the cost of the conference / summer school) could not claimed. Caution was noted in terms of ensuring students do not apply for this for primary research trips that should already be costed into their budgets for their degrees. The Fund should enhance students’ degree rather than pay for it. The cap will remain at £500.

**ACTION: GK to redraft guidance document and application form following discussions and advertise to students.**

**16-17/39 Marshall Scholarship opportunity – Andrew Brown [Encl. 5]**

AB, from the Global Engagement Office, presented a paper he co-authored with Nick Skeavington (NS) in the International Office on the handling of the US Marshall Scholarships. York is one of 36 universities that have a joint agreement with Marshall. While UK universities have no input into the application and selection process and are only informed once successful applicants have been awarded a scholarship, the fact York has a partnership is highlighted online and in our recruitment materials. York, however, has not been successful in recruiting any Marshall scholars in recent years, despite having a number of endorsed candidates (those who have selected York as one of their two choices and have been approved by an accredited US university).

KG noted it would be useful to know if any of those who indicated York as a preferred choice came to York, despite not being awarded the scholarship.
It was also noted that good scholars we get have often come to us as UG students and want to return so we should look at eligible visiting students and begin those conversations sooner.

The recommendation to offer interviewed but not selected students a partial scholarship of a 25% fee reduction, mirroring the ORS, was discussed and agreed as a valuable idea. There is an AFSC commitment to having an annual Marshall budget line. If we do not recruit a scholar, we have that budget that can be used in this positive way instead, with the aim of encouraging more applicants to put York first.

**ACTION:** AB to ask CGP to produce an annual report collating which visiting students might be eligible for which fellowships (beyond North American opportunities) and pass to departments so they can have those conversations.

**ACTION:** TS to talk with AB/NS regarding joining NAFA (National Association of Fellowship Advisors) as an institutional member at $200 per year. Decision to be made on where to sit that three person membership.

**ACTION:** AB to track down two interviewed candidates and see if they have made formal applications to York. If so, they can be offered the 25% fee waivers if not, check whether there are still places on their chosen programmes before making the offer. AB to liaise with GK as to outcome.

### Faculty update

#### Social Sciences:

ESRC: MF reported that York had the second highest number of applications into the DTP of the seven participating institutions and second largest number of pathway awards, with a good spread across departments. Three categories of studentship were fully funded by the ESRC (collaborative, WR Networks and AQM). Pathway and inter-disciplinary studentships were funded at 50%. Successful departments each had 50% of the studentships built into their budgets and the university had 3 FTE studentships (translating to 6 match funded pathway students). The definite positive is that York is receiving high quality students in an open competition as opposed to a quota-based system.

TS noted that, as the AFSC budget is so fluid (match funding for bids is put in without monitoring the success rate so the budget can fluctuate considerably), it seems the right place from which to draw any insurance funds for departments that overperform. However, matched studentships based on expected numbers are not included.

MF reported that the DTP is submitting a business case for post-doctoral fellows, managed by DTPs, with each DTP to get 3-4 candidates on a year to 18-month basis.

#### Arts and Humanities:

KG stated that the main focus is on the DTP. Also, a review over the last year has resulted in additional desk space being made available in the Berrick Saul Building, allowing more A&H research students to be accommodated.

#### Sciences:
TS stated that the university has had two major consultations from science research councils recently.

The first was from STFC, consulting on a proposal to change their penalties from on time submission to submission within funded period, so if you did not get 75% submitting within funded period, you would start losing studentships. York spoke strongly against the proposal, as the funded period is 3.5 years for those students and we have no tool to guarantee submission by that point. Their Skills and Training Committee have since blocked it.

The second was EPSRC who did a consultation on the full economic cost of PGRs versus post-docs, in an attempt to work out which is a more efficient way to deliver the research they are funding. They fund a DTP but they stopped funding PGRs on grant proposals. The consequence of the consultation was that they will now allow PGRs, under certain terms, to go back on grant proposals (the first research council to reverse that decision).

16-17/41 Any other business

TS reminded attendees that the scheduled meeting lengths will be reduced to 90 minutes from 2017/18 on.

16-17/42 Date of next meeting: 4 December 2017, 9.00am in H/G/19