Dear Colleagues,

Please find below a summary of our discussions and decisions at the Research Contingency Group last week.

**Update from meeting: Thursday 7 January 2021**

**Update on CoA and UoY contingency fund allocations**
The Group discussed the forthcoming funding round, which has been circulated, and which will close on 1 February. The Group is aware that the current lockdown will have further implications and will continue discussions with external research funders, as appropriate.

**Postgraduate researcher support**
The University Executive Board has agreed to fund our new Covid-19 PhD Scholarship Fund (CPSF). This is a package of support for PhD researchers receiving their stipend via York, and for UK self-funded PhD researchers, who have been most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. For more information, read guidance on the application process and deadlines here.

**Implications for REF**
The Group noted the recent update from REF 2021, which indicates no changes to the national REF exercise timetable, and hence the University will continue planning to existing deadlines. However, it would be helpful if Departments who have specific issues contact the York REF Team as soon as possible.

**Research activities in Spring Term and access to campus**
The Group endorsed the Spring Term proposal, based on current restrictions with the national lockdown. Arrangements will be reviewed in light of any new Government guidance.

- Research activity in specialist facilities on campus (predominantly labs and research facilities) can continue but with reduced building and lab occupancies aiming for ~25% occupancy in the higher density laboratory spaces with 2m social distancing. This will be managed by Departments, with Faculty oversight.
- We are rapidly and robustly reviewing the departmental overlay COVID-19 risk assessments and associated guidance, to help ensure we are both responsive to the fact that a new coronavirus strain is more transmissible and up to date with government guidance.
- All face-to-face research activity is suspended. A limited amount of essential field work required for long-term experiments requiring very limited numbers of researchers attending an external site in mainland UK may be permitted. This will require specific approval at faculty level through the respective Dean's Support Groups.

In addition, the Group noted that:

- We are currently intending to keep the Statutory Maintenance in place across all buildings and keep this position under review.
- Further guidance has also been shared about use of space on campus, outlining scenarios where staff are permitted to come to campus.
Our next meeting is on Monday 25 January 2021. If you feel there are issues that need to be included in these discussions, please do share them with us, or the Deans or Associate Deans for Research.

The latest information and updates can be found on the Staff Research web pages.

Thank you,
Professor Matthias Ruth
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research