

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2011**

**Present:** The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (in the Chair)  
Professor M Collins  
Dr I D'Amico  
Dr J Potts  
Dr A Sowden  
Professor J Steele  
Dr P White

**In attendance:** Director of the Research and Enterprise Office  
The Research Strategy and Policy Manager  
IP Manager  
Research Strategy and Policy Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Professor D Attwell, Dr K Fernandes, Professor E Hancock, Professor J Hobcraft, Professor W Sherman and the Research Grants and Contracts Office Manager

**10-11/38 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2011.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2011 were **approved**.

**10-11/39 Large Grant Database**

Arising from M10-11/18, it was **noted** that further development work relating to the database was in hand. It was **agreed** that whilst useful, the resources required to review and redact all successful grants prior to placing them on the data base were too great. In addition there was concern that electronic copies of document were extremely easy to forward beyond the institution. As such, proving paper copies on request might be more appropriate.

It was **noted** that PURE would be able to hold application documentation and that this could replace the database in the long term. It would also allow the

identification of staff with a track record of successful applications to particularly funders, who might be willing to offer expert advice.

#### **10-11/40 Research Committee members reports on activities undertaken in relation to the support given to their nominated departments**

The Committee **received** a report of Research Committee members' activities in relation to their nominated departments. There were two main ways in which departments were interacted with, either by attending research committee meetings or via informal meetings with the Chair of the DRC. It was suggested that the less formal method tended to be the most productive. It was **agreed** that the contact was a useful way for departmental issues to be raised by Research Committee and members were asked to come forward with agenda items where appropriate.

#### **ACTION ALL**

It was **noted** that there was a need to ensure that research matters were not overlooked, given the current emphasis on student fees and teaching matters. As such Research Committee needed to be more pro-active in relation to raising key issues within the institution.

#### **10-11/41 Annual Operating Statement for Research Committee**

The Committee **received** a report for the completion of the Annual Operating Statement for Research Committee for 2010-11 and the draft statement for 2011-12.

In relation to the report of 2010-11, it was **noted** that the majority of actions had been completed but that a small number needed further work. In relation to the development of a communication strategy, there still needed to be work undertaken in relation to the development of the pages for the major research themes.

It was **agreed** that data relating to Research Students should be a matter for Teaching Committee in the first instance, but that Research Committee should be kept informed of the overarching position and issues that arose. However, there was an on-going need to ensure that matters relating to research students were fully addressed and that this would need to be considered further by the PVC for Research. In particular, funding matters relating to research students was an issue for Research Committee and that the University Awards Committee should provide a report to Research

Committee. Research Committee would also welcome the opportunity to be involved in the discussions relating to a strategy on research students.

#### **ACTION PVC (R)**

In relation to the draft plan for 2011-12, it was **noted** that the actions had been drawn from the operational plan of the Research Strategy. It was **agreed** that the actions relating to staff satisfaction with the infrastructure would be concatenated and that it be made clear that Research Committee's role should be to receive a report on the surveys, not to analyse the results.

It was **agreed** that item 5 needed to include a reference to research communications, rather than communication per se. It was **agreed** that this needed to include the security issues relating to alternative communication tools, in relation to the conditions specified by research funders.

It was **agreed** that action 6 on research capital had become more important due to the developments in the external environment. There also needed to be a reference to sharing of equipment both within the institution and externally.

It was **agreed** that only 2 IDCs needed to be reviewed during 2011/12.

It was **agreed** that an action to monitor developments in relation to open access requirements for outputs and data would need to be added to the operating statement. The action relating to improving research governance should be amended to give it greater prominence.

It was **agreed** that further work would be undertaken, especially in relation to the identification of responsibility and timing and that statement would be approved at the next meeting.

#### **ACTION AMG/MM**

### **10-11/42 Final version of the University Research Strategy**

The Committee **received** the final version of the Research Strategy, which had been revised in line with the overarching style of the other University Strategies. Whilst the ordering of the content had been changed, there had been no major substantive changes to the previous version considered by Research Committee. It was **noted** that there were a small number of typographical errors and members were asked to forward any to the PVC (R) as soon as possible.

## **ACTION ALL**

Once it has been finally completed, the document would be made available to departments via the Registrar and on the Research Web pages. It was also **agreed** that Research Committee should receive a copy of the Business and Community Strategy at the next meeting

## **ACTION AMG**

### **10-11/43 Revised Policy on Research Performance and potential changes**

The Committee **considered** the revised Policy on Research Performance and **noted** that there had been real concern expressed in relation to the lack of clarity on the expected level of performance for individual academic staff and the options available for managing underperformance.

It was **noted** that due to the introduction of teaching only posts, paragraph 2 needed to be altered to make it clear that the policy only related to those staff with research expectations within their contracts.

It was **agreed** that the final sentence of paragraph 5 should be amended so that the emphasis was on the need for international level outputs to arise from research undertaken in a national context.

It was suggested that paragraph 6 should be strengthened by replacing 'may' with 'will' to emphasise the need to effectively disseminate research beyond academia to gain the maximum impact.

It was **noted** that whilst the expectation contained within paragraph 7 was less directive than at other similar institutions, there did need to be greater awareness within the institution as to the importance of research grant applications. As such the wording should be strengthened to emphasise the contribution to the long term sustainability of the research enterprise. In addition there should be a reference to the need to raise research student funding.

With these changes, Research Committee **resolved to recommend** the revised Policy on Research Committee to the Human Resources Policy Committee. In addition, it was noted that the revised Policy should be drawn to the attention of Promotions Committee to ensure that the criteria for promotions were in line with the expectations of research performance. It was also **agreed** to

reiterate that there would be no link between research performance expectations and submission for REF.

It was agreed to raise with HR the concern that whilst there was clear policy for research performance, there was not a similar policy for teaching and that the current misconduct policy also referred to research only.

**ACTION AMG**

#### **10-11/44 Latest developments relating to the PURE system**

The Committee **received** an oral report relating to the PURE system and **noted** that there were now 10 UK institutions using the system with another 5 institutions at contract negotiation stage. The benefit of additional institutions was that it allowed the sharing of the costs of any software developments.

It was **noted** that the import of legacy data from Thompson Reuters, and the data from the CRD and SPRU publications databases were due to be completed by the end of June.

A significant amount of effort had been put into the development of the research portal and that it would be going live once the data imports had been completed. There would be some opportunities to develop the portal after it had been launched.

The REF module was advancing and would be available shortly. The reporting function was less developed than anticipated, but a project had begun with the Planning Office to identify data requirements.

The Research Strategy and Policy Officer was commended for her work on the project.

#### **10-11/45 Information relating to REF 2014 and the current University proposals for supporting submissions** [CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE – FOIA EXEMPT – COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE]

#### **10-11/46 Feedback from the Head of Department Away day on Research**

The Committee **received** a report on the feedback arising from the Head of Department away day on Research. It was **noted** that the report had not yet

been seen by Heads of Department and hence the content should be treated as confidential until it had been formally agreed.

It was **noted** with interest that within the institution there were very clear differences in relation to departmental expectations of the roles and responsibilities of Chairs of Departmental Research Committees.

The suggestion that an alternative structure for supporting research might be required was fully discussed. It was **agreed** that there did need to be more overarching support, together with systems to support cross departmental activities. However, the adoption of Faculties would prove disruptive in the short term and could lead to a more inflexible system for inter-Faculty activities in the long term. The current system did allow for flexibility but there was evidence that it did not support the development of large research projects and grants. The proposal for development of research directors was discussed.

The Committee **noted** the data on average size of grant at York in comparison to the national average. There was concern that different work load models in departments were impacting on grant applications, particularly where the development of a large grant was not seen as a major research activity. It was **noted** that income per FTE for the institution was high, but that the average size of grant was smaller. This was of concern due to the external emphasis towards awarding larger grants. The Committee asked for further data, to identify the problem and to benchmark performance against comparative institutions.

#### **ACTION HAW**

It was **agreed** that the report highlighted a number of important issues and that further work needed to be undertaken to identify what actions should be undertaken and which issues needed to be addressed at University level and which were departmental responsibilities.

#### **ACTION AMG/MM**

### **10-11/47 Proposed consolidation of internal research support funding**

The Committee **received** an oral report on the proposal to consolidate the different internal funding streams for research and innovation pump priming, in order to simplify the application process and the align reporting systems. The intention was to have a single application route and for the RSP to

identify the most appropriate internal funding route. This would include international research priming funds.

It was **agreed** that this was a sensible proposal that should be developed further.

**ACTION AMG**

#### **10-11/48 Report on the activities of the Researcher Development Unit**

The Committee **considered** a report on the activities of the Research Development Unit. It was **noted** that whilst the Research Councils had agreed to increase fees by £200 to cover training costs, this funding was not hypothecated within the institution. It was also **noted** that researching training on impact was being supported via HEIF funding.

It was **agreed** that the Research Innovation Officer be invited to the next meeting to present a report on Innovation Training.

**ACTION AMG**

#### **10-11/49 Research income by department and units, for the period from August 2010 to February 2011**

The Committee **received for information** research income by department and units, for the period from August 2010 to February 2011

#### **10-11/50 TRAC Steering Committee on the issues arising from the Wakeham Report**

The Committee **received for information** a paper to the TRAC Steering Committee on the issues arising from the Wakeham Report.

#### **10-11/51 Annual Report on Research Misconduct**

The Committee **received for information** the Annual Report on Research Misconduct.

#### **10-11/52 Minutes of the Clinical Trials Committee for the meeting of 31 January 2011**

The Committee **received for information** the minutes of the Clinical Trials Committee for the meeting of 31 January 2011.

**10-11/53 Report of the Research Priming Fund meeting of the meeting of 20 January 2011**

The Committee **received for information** a report of the Research Priming Fund meeting of the meeting of 20 January 2011.

**10-11/54 Paper on Research Capital.**

The Committee **received for information** a paper on Research Capital. It was **noted** that this was an additional item and that the financial costs described in the paper had only been agreed in principle.

**10-11/55 Date of next meeting**

The Committee **noted** the provisional schedule of meetings for 2011/12. All meetings are due to take place on Wednesdays at 2.15pm

19 October 2011  
30 November 2011  
18 January 2012  
21 March 2012  
6 June 2012

**June 2011**  
**Anna Grey**  
**Research Strategy and Policy Manager**