

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2011

Present: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (in the Chair)
The Deputy Vice Chancellor (for item 11-12/09 and 10)
Professor M Collins
Dr I D'Amico
Professor K Fernandes
Professor E Hancock
Professor J Hobcraft
Dr S Rees Jones

In attendance: The Research Strategy and Policy Manager
Research Grants and Contracts Office Manager
IP Manager
Research Strategy and Policy Officer
Information Systems Project Officer
Planning Officer
Research Innovation Training Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Professor D Atwell, Professor F Hardman, Professor Paul Kaye, Dr J Potts, Dr A Sowden and Director of the Research and Enterprise Office

11-12/01 Briefing from the Research Strategy and Policy Officer on the latest developments to the PURE system

The Committee **received** a briefing from the Research Strategy and Policy Officer on the latest developments to the PURE system, especially in relation to the REF module.

11-12/02 Briefing from the Information Systems Project Officer on the Discover Project in relation to Research Benchmarking data

The Committee **received** from the Information Systems Project Officer and Planning Officer on the Discover Project in relation to Research Benchmarking data

11-12/03 Terms of reference and revised membership of the committee

The Committee **noted** the terms of reference and revised membership of the committee and welcomed Sarah Rees Jones to her first meeting of the Committee.

The Committee discussed the role of the Committee and the need to deal robustly with the research management challenges of the institution. There was also a wish for members to be fully briefed on research support developments, to be involved in shaping the overall strategy and direction of research but that the Committee should not be responsible for ensuring implementation.

It was **agreed** that the Committee should set up a series of Working Group on specific topics which would make recommendations to the full committee. It was also noted that the administrative support for research needed to more appropriately aligned to research themes and strengthened where required and there needed to be a more proactive link to departmental research committee minutes. However, there was a need to ensure that any developments did not increase the barriers to interdisciplinary research.

The information which the Committee needed in order to undertake its revised role was discussed. It was suggested that it included some of the information given in the earlier presentations but also covered:-

- Reports on research activities within departments on a regular basis
- New research developments and new areas
- Research support levels at similar institutions
- Benchmarking of performance against other institutions, especially highlighting those doing better than the sector average

It was also **agreed** that the committee should have oversight of postgraduate research student matters, where these related to strategic decisions such as Doctoral Research Centres, but not matters relating to individual students.

It was **agreed** to discuss the role and development of Research Committee at the next meeting.

It was further **agreed** that the Committee should receive a paper from the Director of Research and Enterprise on relationship between Research Committee and innovation and enterprise activities and priorities.

ACTION MM

11-12/04 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2011.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2011 were **approved**.

11-12/05 Pilot audit of the ethics code of practice

Arising from MM10-11/26 the Committee **noted** that the University Ethics Committee had agreed recently to undertake a pilot audit of the ethics code of practice to assess departmental compliance and fitness for purpose. A copy of the findings would be received by Research Committee

11-12/06 Annual operating statement for Research Committee

Arising from MM10-11/41, the Committee **received** a revised copy of the annual operating statement for Research Committee

11-12/07 University Business and Community Strategy

Arising from MM10-11/42 the Committee **received** a copy of the University Business and Community Strategy

11-12/08 Proposed policy on research performance

Arising from MM10-11/43 the Committee **noted** that discussions were being undertaken with HR to ensure that the policy was commensurate with the revised capability and conduct policies that had been recently introduced.

11-12/09 Report on the results of the recent Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

The Committee **considered** a report on the results of the recent Postgraduate Research Experience Survey. It was **noted** a number of areas where the institution was performing above the sector average.

However there was a lower than sector average score for matters related to the Library facilities, specifically content, and financial support. There was some indication with issues relating to thesis examination but that this was based a very small number of responses.

It was also **noted** that there were a small number of departments who were performing at a lower level than the university standard and that the Deputy Vice Chancellor had already met with them and asked for an action plan.

The issue of adequate space for research students had also been **noted**. For some departments, new facilities, such as the Berrick Saul Building and some Heslington East based departments had improved student perceptions, but that this was not the case for all such departments. As such, the Graduate Students Association had been asked to run a number of focus groups to identify outstanding matters.

It was also **noted** that students still did not feel part of the research culture of a department and it was suggested this was an area that research Committee might wish to take a view on.

The Committee also **noted** the completion rates within 4 years for PGR students and commented upon the significant differences between departments. It was noted that the figures only related to students who had completed and did not include those students who had withdrawn. It was **noted** that there were a number of other factors that could impact upon completion rates such as the nature of the student's funding and hence the figures might reflect these differences rather than simply departmental factors. However, there was concern that the differences could be due to poor practice in departments or by poor supervisory arrangements. It was **agreed** that further analysis of the figures needed to be undertaken.

It was **agreed** that there should be a higher level discussion as to the expectations of PhD students and departmental processes, but that it was not clear who would lead these discussions. This included discussions such as publishing as a student, length of a PhD, development of doctoral centres, joint DTCs with other institutions, student expectations and studentships available. This would include articulating what was to be expected from a research postgraduate

It was agreed that the Deputy Vice Chancellor and the PVC (Research) would write a joint paper for consideration at the next meeting.

ACTION JL/TS

11-12/10 Presentation from the Research Innovation Officer on activities relating to Innovation training

The Committee **received** a presentation from the Research Innovation Officer on activities relating to Innovation training. The Research Innovation Officer was thanked for her informative presentation.

11-12/11 Current buddying system for Research Committee members

The Committee **considered** a proposal relating to the current buddying system for Research Committee members. The importance of the role was reiterated by the PVC for Research, especially given the need to make the Committee more proactive. However, whilst the concept was excellent, it did not preclude the need to link more effectively with Research Forum and to departments. It was agreed that the term buddy was unhelpful and that members were asked for alternative descriptor.

It was **agreed** that Research Committee members would need to be involved in supporting departments during REF preparations and hence it might be more useful to align departmental contacts in line with subject specialism. It was also suggested that the C group, which informally advised the PVC for Research, might wish to revise its membership to cover the 4 main panels.

It was **agreed** that Committee members should send comments on the paper for the Research Strategy and Policy Officer and that once an agreement had been reached, it would be discussed with departments.

ACTION ALL

It was **agreed** that the role of Research Committee members and REF would be revisited, once the results of the mock REF were known and the areas for attention identified.

ACTION AMG

11-12/12 Report on matters relating to REF 2014

The Committee **considered** a report on matters relating to REF 2014 and **noted** that training in relation to Equality and Diversity would need to be undertaken by all staff involved in REF decision making processes.

The Committee also **noted** the comments made in relation to the REF consultation relating to the different career routes for the Arts and

Humanities and the potential for additional dispensation for such early career researchers.

11-12/13 Report on the preparations relating to the Mock REF

The Committee **considered** a report on the preparations relating to the Mock REF. It was **noted** that departments were not being asked to develop new research strategies but that a number of queries had been received in relation to these. It was reported that it had already been agreed to hold a Research Forum on this topic.

It was **agreed** Research Committee members should have access to the PURE REF module, for those departments which they buddied, once the list had been finalised.

ACTION RSC

11-12/14 Changes to the Research Priming Funds for the institution

The Committee **considered** a report on changes to the Research Priming Funds for the institution. The Committee endorsed the decision to remove the devolved priming fund and to require all bids to be made centrally. The need to put out a major call in May for the following year was also **noted**.

The proposed changes to the Research Priming Fund were **agreed** and departments would be informed of the forthcoming call for bids as soon as possible.

ACTION RSC

11-12/15 Research income by department and units, for the period from August 2010 to July 2011

The Committee **received** the research income by department and units, for the period from August 2010 to July 2011 and **noted** with concern the reduction in research income.

11-12/16 Awards and applications for all department and units, for the period from August 2010 to July 2011
[CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE – FOIA EXEMPT – COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE]

11-12/17 Departmental responses to the Research Committee reviews of specific Departments following RAE 2008 results

It was **agreed** to consider this item at the following meeting.

11-12/18 Report on recent guidance released on the Freedom of Information legislation and research information

It was **agreed** to consider this item at the following meeting.

11-12/19 Report on the Centre for Hyperpolarisation in Magnetic Resonance (CHYM)

The Committee **received for information** a report on the Centre for Hyperpolarisation in Magnetic Resonance (CHYM).

11-12/20 Report from the meeting of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee of 21 March 2011

The Committee **received for information** a report from the meeting of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee of 21 March 2011

11-12/21 Wellcome Bid for an Institutional Strategic Support Fund

The Committee **received for information** a copy of the successful bid to Wellcome for an Institutional Strategic Support Fund

11-12/22 Date of next meeting

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

30 November 2011

18 January 2012

21 March 2012

6 June 2012

November 2011
Anna Grey
Research Strategy and Policy Manager