

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2011**

**Present:** The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (in the Chair)  
Professor D Attwell  
Professor M Collins  
Dr I D'Amico  
Dr K Fernandes  
Professor E Hancock  
Professor J Hobcraft  
Professor W Sherman  
Dr A Sowden  
Professor J Steele  
Dr P White

**In attendance:** Director of the Research and Enterprise Office  
The Research Strategy and Policy Manager  
The Research Grants and Contracts Office Manager  
IP Manager  
Research Strategy and Policy Officer  
Research and Enterprise Communications Officer (for  
MM 10-11/30)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr J Potts

**10-11/25 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2011.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2011 were **approved**.

**10-11/26 Update on the Research Ethics Framework**

Arising for M10-11/18, it was **noted** that the report on the Research Ethics Framework had been sent to the University Ethics Committee but that it had not been fully considered yet. The Chair **noted** concern that there appeared to be a lack of University engagement with the issues raised and would seek clarification as to where responsibility for implementing changes rested.

**ACTION JL**

**10-11/27 Information relating to REF 2014 and the current University proposals for supporting submissions**  
[CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE – FOIA EXEMPT – COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE]

**10-11/28 Policy on Research Performance and potential changes**

The Committee **considered** the existing Policy on Research Performance and **noted** that it had been last reviewed in 2005 and that it needed revision in light of the external research environment. It was **agreed** that giving clear guidance on the research expectations in terms of level of performance of individual academics was extremely useful. In particular, it needed to emphasise the contribution of staff to the strategic direction of departments and the university as a whole and to recognise the changes in staff grade descriptors.

It was **agreed** that the policy should include a reference to the expectations in relation to the impact agenda and that departments should be expected to give clear, discipline specific guidance on research output publication rates and quality. It was also suggested that a reference to research funding applications should be included.

It was suggested that there should be a reference to expectation management, so that staff were aware that departments could choose to prioritise research in specific areas and that funding for individual research interests was not always available.

It was **agreed** that the Policy be updated for the June meeting as it would form the basis of the REF staff selection process.

**ACTION AMG**

It was **noted** that it would be extremely useful to clarify where research performance expectations were managed within a department and it was agreed that this was an important role for the Departmental Research Committees. In addition, it was suggested that there should be a clearer link from the policy to academic and research job applications and the promotions procedures. This would be discussed with HR

**ACTION JL**

**10-11/29 Latest development relating to the PURE system**

The Committee **considered** a report on recent activities relating to the implementation of the PURE system. It was **noted** that all departments had now received a demonstration of the system and that data was now been added. However, not all academic staff had yet logged in, as required.

The delays relating to the data import of legacy data via the Thompson Reuters In-Cites package were **noted** and it was **agreed** that the deadline for uploading outputs should be extended to the end of May.

There was a discussion regarding the relationship between existing departmental research profiles and the PURE York Research Database website. It was **noted** that a small number of departments had asked to make use of web services in order to populate existing web pages. It was **agreed** that in some circumstances, where it was a requirement of a funder, departments could have separate research pages, but that the default position would be for departments to use the York Research Database as the primary research pages. This decision would be formally sent to Chairs of Departmental Research Committees and Departmental Computing Officers.  
**ACTION RC**

It was **noted** that discussions were being undertaken with the developers as to how less formal Research Groups could be displayed, but that this might require additional expenditure. This would be considered further.

In relation to REF, a system would be in place in order for the mock REF to be managed effectively.

It was **noted** that the introduction of the system had highlighted a small but significant number of staff who were not on contracts that required them to undertake research, but who did publish research papers. In some cases, the contracts had now been reviewed and amended, but where this was not appropriate departments had asked that such staff should be allocated a PURE profile. It was **agreed** that this was a complex matter but that it would not be in the institutional interest to give such staff a profile. It was **agreed** that it would be more appropriate to consider the nature of the role and to clarify the expectations of the contract.

It was **noted** that a similar issue arose with research students but that for these individuals the information could be stored but would not be publically displayed. It was **agreed** that departments would be informed of these decisions and the protocols for capturing student research outputs.

## ACTION RC

### 10-11/30 Large Grant Database

The Committee **received** a presentation of the newly developed Large Grant database, which allowed staff access to examples of successful applications for large grants. It was **noted** that all sensitive data had been redacted and the PIs involved had agreed to the inclusion of the application. It was intended to keep the database up-to-date with additional examples as they became available.

It was **noted** that each example made it clear that it was for internal use only, the web pages were only available to York staff and that the file size was deliberately large to discourage staff from downloading the files. However, it was noted that staff access currently included associates and that due to difficulties with defining this group, access for associated staff should be removed.

It was **noted** that the files also included the CVs of Co-Investigators and it was **agreed** that these should be removed as standard, unless the CV was central to the application, such as in the case of Fellowship applications. It was also **noted** that for some research councils the case for support was a separate document and that where possible this document should be appended to the application.

It was suggested that other funding applications that could be included on the website were those for different EU grants, good examples of Pathways to Impact and a significant AHRC grant. It was **agreed** that it should be the assumption that all successful large grants should be included in the database and that the Agresso sign off form should be amended to include an option for indicating that the application was commercially sensitive and hence should not be included.

### ACTION HAW

It was **agreed** to monitor the usage of the website and to consider how it could be developed on light of feedback

### ACTION MM/SG

### **10-11/31 Interdepartmental Centres**

The Committee **considered** a paper on the revised governance arrangements and criteria for Interdepartmental Centres. It was **noted** that changes had been proposed to reduce the administrative burden where appropriate but to ensure that was appropriate oversight of those areas of activity that carried a potentially significant risk to the institution. It was **noted** that cross departmental groups with significant costs would need to become Interdepartmental Centres and that this would not be optional. However, this did not include those centres which occupied space but did not have other costs associated with it, as the University did not charge for space.

It was **agreed** the proposals did simplify and clarify the oversight of such centres and that the proposal did not stop interdepartmental research groups from branding their activities via websites.

### **10-11/32 Report of the Interdepartmental Research Centre Review for the Centre for Usable Home Technology (CUHTec)**

The Committee **considered** a report of the Interdepartmental Research Centre Review for the Centre for Usable Home Technology (CUHTec). The Secretary apologised for the delay in the production of the report, but it had been delayed by the work in IDCs, noted above.

It was **noted** that Centre was now wholly within Computer Science and hence was no longer regarded as an IDC. The response from the Head of Department, in relation to the external links, would be circulated to members after the meetings

**ACTION RC**

### **10-11/33 Report of the Interdepartmental Research Centre Review for the Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR)**

The Committee **considered** a report of the Interdepartmental Research Centre Review for the Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR). It was **noted** that the centre would remain an IDC and that there would remain a tension between centres and departmental strategies which would need to be managed.

### **10-11/34 Outcome of the MHRA Clinical Trials audit**

The Committee **received** an oral report on the outcome of the MHRA Clinical Trials audit. It was **noted** that the audit only related to the clinical trials involving medicines and medical devices and hence only a small number of trials were reviewed. Whilst there had been major findings, the audit had noted that the University had already agreed to amend its processes so that it would only co-sponsor trials with York Hospital. A formal response would be made to the audit and this, the audit report and the minutes of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee would be received by Research Committee at its next meeting.

It was confirmed that the current co-sponsorship and Clinical Trials oversight only applied to York staff and that HYMS Hull staff were governed by Hull University protocols.

#### **10-11/35 Information awards and applications data**

The Committee **received for information** the awards and applications data for the period August 2010 to November 2010. It was **noted** that there was an inherent lag in the system due the time it took for grants to be approved. Whilst there did appear to be a decrease in applications this was due to a number of very large grants that had been awarded in the previous years. However, when these known spikes in activity were smoothed it indicated that Research Council funding was depressed but that this had been compensated for by growth in Health related funding

#### **10-11/36 Research income by department and units, for the period from August 2010 to January 2011**

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

#### **10-11/37 Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was Wednesday 8 June 2011 at 2.15pm

**March 2011**

**Anna Grey**

**Research Strategy and Policy Manager**