

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2012

Present: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (in the Chair)
Professor Karl Claxton
Professor M Collins
Dr I D'Amico
Professor M Beaney
Professor K Fernandes
Professor E Hancock
Professor P Kaye
Dr J Potts
Dr A Sowden

In attendance: Director of the Research and Enterprise Office
The Research Strategy and Policy Manager
IP Manager
Research Strategy and Policy Officer
Research Grants and Contracts Manager
Tim Franklin

Apologies for absence were received from Professor F Hardman and Professor S Rees-Jones

11-12/75 Format of the Meeting

The Committee **noted** that this was a special meeting to discuss and debate the development of the Research Committee to ensure that it was fit for purpose in the developing research culture. As such, no papers had been circulated and the meeting was being facilitated by Tim Franklin, the Strategic Projects Programme Manager.

11-12/76 Presentation on Research Committee Discussions

The Committee **received** a presentation on the background of the review and the issues identified by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research, the Academic Co-ordinators and administrative research managers.

11-12/77 Overview of discussions

The Committee **confirmed** the conclusion reached by the PVC (Research) and others that there was a need to become more proactive and to drive research management rather than react to external drivers. Following on from the presentation, a number of issues were discussed.

It was **agreed** that the Committee should be involved in the production and creation of the business case for new developments. This work included discussion of resourcing, together with the prioritising and strategic use of funds to ensure the effective use of resources. It was recognised that the Committee did not currently discuss nor directly oversee resources, but might wish to articulate Research Resource needs such as Research Anniversary positions.

It was **agreed** that performance management was a key area of activity and needed to be undertaken on an annual basis, rather than limited to the management of the RAE/REF submission. However, there was a debate as to the level of this oversight, whether it was holding departments accountable for research performance or ensuring that departments had robust processes for mentoring and developing research. It was agreed that there was a role for challenging departmental research committees as well as supporting and managing research more generally. However, whilst departmental performance management could not and should not be replaced by central oversight, the Committee did need to consider how it should intervene where a departmental research committee was clearly 'failing'

It was further **noted** that an important role for the University Research Committee was to raise the profile of research undertaken and to ensure that research activities and workloads were given the same weight in terms of planning as teaching in departments. It was unclear to the Committee how its work and oversight fitted into the MTP/LTP process and whether the current system was fit for purpose in managing research. This issue should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

It was **noted** that certain central funds, such as pump priming and scholarships needed to be managed at an institutional level, to ensure efficient use of resources. This would include strategic collaborations, such as White Rose DTCs and equipment sharing and how these funds should fit within an overarching long term research strategy. However, there was need to

recognise that decisions should not be driven solely by potential income generation.

The Committee was **concerned** that it did not have the same profile or recognition within the governance or management structure of the institution as other research intensive universities. It needed to shape the current and future research agenda and should be actively consulted on matters that impacted on research, such as modularisation and workload models. This would be strengthened by the Academic Co-ordinators joining the Committee. It was **agreed** to circulate the job description of the Academic Co-ordinators in order to understand how their remit fitted with Research Committee.

ACTION AMG

The Committee needed to be aware that there were different but equally successful models for undertaken research such as the lone researcher vis-à-vis the research team and that any research framework needed to take cognisance of this. There was also a need for Research Committee to be better informed as to the nature, type and themes of research being undertaken across the institution. However, it was recognised that much of the framework for research support was driven by Research Councils.

It was also **recognised** that in strengthening university research committee, similar changes needed to take place within departments such that the Chair of the Departmental Research Committee should be on the Departmental Senior Management Team and should be actively involved in the MTP.

It was **agreed** that greater management of research should generate greater feed-back of important issues from Research Committee to Departmental Research Committees and vice versa. However all of these proposed changes suggested a different relationship between Research Committee and PVC Research and that the new structure should enable this regardless of who was in post.

One area that the Committee did not currently oversee was that of postgraduate research students and it was agreed that should be altered. It was **agreed** that in relation to the PGR, the role would relate to PGRs contribution to the research activities and the policy and strategy, but not as individual students. In light of this, it was not felt that a PGR representative on the committee would be helpful.

It was **agreed** that the committee would need to consider what areas to priorities and what areas should be undertaken by working groups. It was further agreed that no additional administrative staff need to attend the committee but that they would need to be involved in working groups. It was also suggested that a research operations group reporting to research committee, made up of the different administrative research support managers, might be a useful development.

11-12/78 Conclusions

The Committee **agreed** that the following matter should be prioritised:-

Strategic Planning

Does the Committee know where it wants to be?

Empower/Enable /Facilitate Departments to consider this

How issue such as modularisation/IT related impact on the capacity to research.

Performance Management

Framework and modelling tools

Factual data for guidance and identifying new areas

Departmental Research Committees

support, challenge, manage

issue development at strategic level

making it 'visual'/set template

Enabling Collaborative working

intra University – supporting funding requests and resource allocation

inter University

Improving Link to MTP/LTP

New opportunities

Industry links and industry led income opportunities including

Knowledge transfer.

Doctoral Training Centres.

11-12/79 Date of Next meeting

To note the date of the next meeting is Wednesday 6 June 2012 at 2.15pm

May 2012

Anna Grey

Research Strategy and Policy Manager