

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2013

Present: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (in the Chair)
Professor M Beaney
Professor K Claxton
Professor E Hancock
Professor F Hardman
Professor P Kaye
Professor M Ormrod
Professor S Rees-Jones
Professor J Potts
Professor M Smith
Dr A Sowden

In attendance: Director of the Research and Enterprise Office
Research Strategy and Policy Manager
Research Strategy and Policy Officer
REF Impact Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Professor M Collins, Professor B Fulton, Professor A Webster and the Research Grants and Contracts Manager

12-13/40 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2013 were **approved**.

12-13/41 Process for the approval of revised Research Strategies

The Committee **considered** the proposed process for approving the revised departmental research strategies. It was **noted** that a number of departments had not submitted the documentation as requested and that there were concerns regarding the quality of a number which had been received. Committee members were asked to provide a view on whether the documents were fit for purpose, including whether they were compliant with the prescribed format as soon as possible to the REF Impact Officer.

ACTION ALL

It was **noted** that the university was intending to use the strategies for resource allocation and the setting of other priorities and hence robust strategies were extremely important. It was **reported** that the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and the Academic Coordinators would provide a report on the strategies to SMG in April and any difficulties were likely to be raised with the respective departments by the Vice Chancellor.

It was **noted** that the documents would be made available electronically within the institution and there was a discussion as to whether there was a need for an edited public version. It was **noted** that departments should be aware that the confidentiality of electronic documents was generally hard to maintain within institutions. However, departments did need to highlight where a strategy included an implementation plan so that this section could be redacted prior to appearing on the website.

It was **agreed** that for those strategies which were still not fit for purpose, a page limited template would be produced, together with a checklist of requirements. It was **noted** that the aim was to produce strategies that clearly articulated what the department was attempting to achieve and what the priorities were, particularly as this was also required in the REF Environment Template.

There was a discussion as to the nature of feedback that had been given in relation to previous submission. It was **noted** that Research Committee had agreed to give the full range of views and that departments should understand that these were comments from peers and that different views were highly likely.

12-13/42 Overarching quality and preparedness of departmental submissions in relation to REF Environment and Impact Templates. (FOIA Exempt)

12-13/43 HEFCE call for advice regarding open access in relation to REF post 2014

The Committee **considered** the HEFCE call for advice regarding open access in relation to REF post 2014 and discussed how the institution should respond. Whilst it was agreed that Open Access was an important development, there was concern that REF was the wrong mechanism for leveraging open access uptake and that should focus purely on research excellence. In particular, it was **noted** that REF was underpinned by a statement that place of publication was not a factor in REF assessments, but that this proposal would remove that

central tenet. There was also concern that the proposal might discourage international collaboration and appointments.

Members were asked to send any further comments to the Secretary, in time for inclusion in the response

ACTION ALL

12-13/44 Revised Guidance for the RCUK Policy on Open Access

The Committee **received** the revised guidance for the RCUK policy on open access and **noted** that the University had already set up a Working Group to consider the issues raised. The reduction in the requirements for RCUK grants was welcomed but that the University still needed to ensure that research publications were compliant with green open access standards. It was further **noted** that work was being undertaken to ensure that staff were aware of individual journal permissions in relation to depositing outputs in repositories and this information was intended to be made available via PURE.

12-13/45 RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct

The Committee **considered** the RCUK policy and guidelines on the governance of good research conduct and **noted** this now included reference to sanctions that could be applied should the University fail to comply. Whilst this was not an unaccepted development, there was a need to ensure the University conduct framework was fit for purpose. A project relating to compliance was currently being undertaken within the Research Strategy and Policy Office.

12-13/46 Implications of the revised teaching timetable

The Committee **considered** a report relating to the implications of the proposed revised teaching timetable. There was significant concern relating to the timing of the proposal, given the recent changes to the modularisation framework, which had involved a significant administrative burden. In addition, it was unclear from the proposal whether additional time was being added to the teaching year and hence the time that could be devoted entirely to research was being reduced. It was further argued that the comparison to other international models was not helpful, due the differences in teaching systems, where there was additional support for other activities such as pastoral support for students. It was further **noted** that proposals were focussed on undergraduate teaching, with little reference to the impact on taught postgraduate cohorts.

The Committee was **concerned** that there appeared to have been no risk analysis in terms of the impact on research time and activities and that this needed to be considered as a matter of urgency. It was further suggested that, given the significant amount of work that would be involved, there needed to be a much stronger case made as to the benefits of the new system, compared to the opportunity costs incurred.

12-13/47 To receive a report on the awards and applications for all department and units, for the period from August 2012 to December 2012

The Committee **received** a report on the awards and applications for all department and units, for the period from August 2012 to December 2012 and were pleased to note the improvement in grant income, particularly in the Departments of Physics and Chemistry. Departmental Research Committees and Research Grants and Contracts were to be thanked for their endeavours. But it was noted that further improvements were necessary if the University was to remain competitive.

12-13/48 Developments in Relation to PURE

The Committee **noted** that changes were being made to the methodology relating to how data was drawn into PURE from other core administrative system, particularly in relation to students. In order to ensure that the methodology was working as expected, URC members were asked to check their own PURE profiles and to confirm that the information was correct
ACTION ALL

12-13/49 To receive for information the minutes of Ethics Committee held on 9 November 2012

The Committee **received for information** the minutes of Ethics Committee held on 9 November 2012

12-13/50 Progress report on the Research Data Management Project

The Committee **received for information** a Progress report on the Research Data Management Project

12-13/51 Date of next meeting

The Committee **noted** the date of the next meeting on Friday 14 June 2013 at **9.15am**

March 2013

Anna Grey

Research Strategy and Policy Manager