

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2013

Present: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)
Dr I D'Amico
Professor B Fulton
Professor T Gans
Professor P Kaye
Professor M Ormrod
Professor J Potts
Professor M Smith
Professor J Swaffield

In attendance: Professor D Smith (PVC(R) elect)
Director of the Research and Enterprise Office
Research Strategy and Policy Manager
Research Grants and Contracts Manager
Research Strategy and Policy Officer
REF Impact Officer (MM16 - 26 only)
Research Integrity Project Officer (Secretary)
Ms L Waller

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Beaney, Professor Claxton, Dr Finch, Professor Hardman, Dr Rees Jones and Professor Webster.

13-14/16 Terms of reference and membership

The Committee **considered** revised terms of reference and membership, modified in the light of comments from the previous meeting (URC.13-14/11). It **noted** that:

- (a) The terms of reference now articulated the Committee's responsibility to champion and promote research excellence; and its role in flagging up to SMG and Planning Committee where other initiatives within the University presented an opportunity cost to the research endeavour
- (b) Operational issues relating to the content of annual departmental reports had been picked up within the draft template for these reports, for consideration as a separate agenda item

- (c) The new Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (PVCR) intended to review the status of research centres and their relationship to departments; this would be reflected in the terms of reference in due course.
- (d) The new Vice-Chancellor and PVCR, working with SMG and Research Committee, would determine the extent to which interdisciplinarity was a key strategic aim, and whether this should be captured in the formal terms of reference.

Regarding representation from the Information Directorate, it was reiterated that as with other support services, they would be invited to attend meetings as necessary in relation to specific projects.

The Committee **agreed to recommend** the new terms of reference and membership to Senate for approval, subject to modification of the specification for representation from the academic clusters, as follows: 'In order to ensure breadth of representation, no two of *these members* should be from the same department.'

13-14/17 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2013 were **approved** (URC.13-14/12).

13-14/18 Academic Study Time

Arising from M13-14/10, it was **reported** that the Committee's concerns in relation to the draft policy had been shared by Senate at its meeting on 22 October 2013. It was **noted** that the final version of the policy would be brought back to Senate for formal approval later in the year.

13-14/19 Reports from Committee members

Arising from M13-14/13, the Committee **noted** that issues regarding 'big data' had been referred to the working group on research and high performance computing. The group was developing a working definition of 'big data', and scoping out activity in this area at the University and the support provision needed. Members were encouraged to ensure that their departments were represented on the working group if relevant.

ACTION: ALL

It was further **noted** that the Research and Enterprise Office was looking at economic linkage in this area, and it would be helpful to join this up with the working group.

ACTION: AG to liaise with R&E colleagues

13-14/20 Allocation of additional investment in Open Access

Arising from M13-14/14, the Committee **received** a response to its queries on allocation of RCUK funding to support open access requirements, from the Director of Information (URC.13-14/13). In response, it **noted** that there were sufficient data in PURE covering the last five years to inform decisions such as these, and that use of PURE in this way should be encouraged. Information was also available via the RSPO on how funds had been spent at Oxford and Glasgow.

The Committee further **noted** that:

- (a) There was no stated time limit on prepaid APC subscriptions, but the aim was to spend them as quickly as possible.
- (b) There were no funder requirements for gold open access beyond RCUK, and RCUK had since rowed back on their initial requirements. The default requirement was for green open access. The White Rose repository was an available route to fulfil open access requirements, and was set up to take account of embargo periods where necessary.
- (c) Where research was not project funded, researchers were not constrained by open access requirements, but should take the issue into account. However, it was important to note that plans for the post-2014 REF included an open access requirement for submissions which could not be implemented retrospectively. Exact requirements were currently under discussion with the sector including publishers, and the Russell Group were due to hold a meeting on open access in December. It was clarified that research output information relating to staff who left the University during a REF period would still be retained in PURE.
- (d) Further information on open access, including a list of publishers with prepaid APC subscriptions was available on the Information Directorate webpages or via Thom Blake.

13-14/21 Update on the REF submission (FOIA exempt and Strictly Confidential)

13-14/22 Response to the HEFCE consultation on open access in the post-2014 REF

The Committee **received** for information a copy of the University's response to the HEFCE consultation on open access in the post-2014 REF (URC.13-14/15). It **noted** that:

- (a) The response was in line with those from other members of the Russell Group, and that there was a shared disquiet regarding the HEFCE proposals, which were seen as a constraint on the REF return. The University had taken a pragmatic position in its response to press for as much flexibility as possible, while recognising the value of open access. A Russell Group collective response had also been submitted, based on input from its members, in addition to returns from individual institutions.
- (b) Recent developments indicated that the open access requirement was likely to apply to journal articles and conference proceedings, but not monographs
- (c) Significant work would be necessary centrally and by DRCs to ensure requirements, once determined, were implemented. In particular, further work was needed to raise staff awareness of open access and how it translated into practice.
- (d) In the case of research collaborations with overseas partners, it was proposed that criteria for open access would only apply to those outputs listing a UK HEI in the address field.
- (e) To date, the University had not undertaken industrially funded research where the funder had specified a particular journal for publication, but the issue could be resolved within the funding contract where necessary.

13-14/23 University Publications Policy

The Committee **received** a draft publications policy (URC.13-14/16). It was **noted** that the policy did not take sufficient account of issues raised by the Research Strategy and Policy Office during the drafting process. The Committee **decided** that these issues needed to be addressed through further discussion between the Information Directorate and the Research Strategy and Policy Office, and requested a revised draft for its next meeting on 15 January 2014.

ACTION: Information Directorate

13-14/24 Research data management

The Committee **considered** a draft policy on research data management (URC.13-14/17).

During discussion, the following points were **noted**:

- Research data were only required to be retrievable, as opposed to uniformly stored and universally accessible. This would require sufficient top level metadata to enable identification, location and any restrictions on access. The Committee **noted** the importance of ensuring that data from staff leaving the institution were retained fully and securely
- The importance of data security, which had legal and ethical implications
- In relation to research collaborations, although all authors on a paper 'owned' the data within it, the University was only responsible for curating data generated by its staff. It **noted** that the working group planned to develop further guidelines in support of the main policy tackling areas such as international collaborations and working with industrial partners.
- The difficulties associated with monitoring policy implementation.

In relation to the draft policy, the Committee **agreed** that:

- (a) There needed to be a clear definition of what was understood by 'research data', to include the Frascati definition of research, and to encompass all the data needed to validate research findings ie not just published data. The definition would also need to take account of findings which might be published at a later date. It would be helpful if all definitions were included earlier in the document.
- (b) Some changes in wording were necessary: removal of the word 'promote' from paragraph 1.7; removal of paragraph 4.4; and more a user friendly approach in paragraph 4.2 relating to data management planning.

In response to the specific questions from the research data management working group, the Committee **decided**:

- (a) That questions relating to intellectual property should be resolved in consultation with the Intellectual Property Manager
- (b) To endorse the importance of metadata in research data management and support the development of appropriate standards and necessary training. It **noted** that the PURE usergroup was working on requirements for

specifying metadata, and that PURE would be able to support this function from February 2014 onwards.

- (c) That the policy should be universal and cover all research carried out at the University, in line with principles of research integrity. This included research not in direct receipt of project funding, although it was acknowledged that in terms of implementation, funder requirements would need to be addressed as a priority. It was therefore likely that University regulations would need to be modified regarding this issue in relation to both taught and research students. It was noted that research students were currently required to deposit copies of their theses with the University, but not the underpinning data. The relationship between research students and supervisors would also need clarification in this respect.
- (d) To endorse the key responsibilities of PIs as outlined in the draft policy. It was **noted** that the policy would have implications in terms of PIs' workload.
- (e) To endorse the proposed role of DRCs in implementing the policy.

The Committee recognised that the policy had resource implications, but **agreed** that operational responsibility for its implementation lay with the Information Directorate, working with chairs of departmental research committees to develop appropriate infrastructure and secure the necessary funding within the University.

The Committee **approved** the policy subject to revisions in response to its comments, and **decided** to delegate final sign-off to the Chair.

13-14/25 Departmental research and impact strategies

The Committee **considered** revised templates and timescales for departmental research and impact strategies (URC.13-14/18). It **noted** that:

- (a) The January deadline applied just to the research strategies, and departments had had a year to work on these
- (b) The research strategy template remained the same as previously, with the exception of the Competencies/context section which was no longer optional. Departments who had already drafted their strategies would therefore only need to make minor adjustments and additions
- (c) The strategies were currently intended for internal use and were not public-facing: they would be considered by the PVCR and SMG, and the Committee would be asked to address matters arising. Subject clusters

would also be asked to discuss their departments' strategies collectively, in order to encourage consideration of relationships between departments including interdisciplinary centres

- (d) The Committee would be able consider related documentation such as implementation plans as part of its reporting requirements.

The Committee **approved** the revised templates and timescales, and **agreed** that the PVCR elect would work with the RSPO to communicate requirements to departments.

ACTION: PVCR elect with RSPO

13-14/26 Annual research reports from departments

The Committee **considered** a draft template for annual research reports from departments (URC.13-14/19). It **noted** that:

- (a) Statements on quality of research outputs would not need to be quantified in detail, but that departments would need to make an overall assessment based on full understanding and knowledge of the area, developed through ongoing processes such as peer review. It was acknowledged that this exercise would probably be easier for the Sciences than the Arts and Humanities.
- (b) Data would be made available through PURE, although data relating to quality would not be unless departments wished to pursue this. The importance of having data to show trends over time was noted.
- (c) In relation to Impact, data on this and knowledge exchange activities would be pulled out of PURE for departments to comment on in terms of quality as well as quantity. HEFCE data by department should also be included.
- (d) Benchmarking data from the sector would be available via the Management Information Gateway.

ACTION: AG to liaise with Business Information Unit

It was **noted** that use of benchmarking data was the subject of the forthcoming Research Forum meeting.

The Committee **approved** the template subject to revisions in response to its comments, and **agreed** to request reports in July in order to avoid the June

common assessment period. Further alignment with related activities such as appraisal would not however be possible, as this varied between departments. The Committee further **agreed** that it would meet in September in order to consider the reports.

13-14/27 Review of the University's governance of research integrity (FOIA exempt and Confidential)

13-14/28 Report on Research Performance Expectations

The Committee **considered** the finalised report from the working group on Research Performance Expectations (URC.13-14/21). It **noted** that revisions had been made in response to comments from the previous meeting.

The Committee **noted** that departments would be expected to develop their own methodologies for judging quality in relation to their specific disciplines. There would be variation across departments regarding what was considered to be a reasonable workload and therefore what could be reasonably achieved within a given period; however, the emphasis was on quality as opposed to quantity, and these issues would be taken into account when benchmarking against sector norms.

The Committee **approved** the report's recommendations and **decided** that Professor Ormrod as the working group's chair should work with the RSPO on communicating requirements to departments

ACTION: WMO with RSPO

The Committee also **noted** its own responsibility for leading on the recommendations made at University level. It further **noted** that the report would be sent to SMG and to the Performance Expectations project steering group.

13-14/29 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2013

The Committee **received** for information the results of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2013 (URC.13-14/22). It **noted** that levels of dissatisfaction with the quality of the research environment were a cause for concern.

The Chair **reported** that SMG had recently endorsed the establishment of a formal Graduate Research School within the University. Although the precise form of the School was still to be determined, the PVCR (elect) would be fully involved in its development, and issues regarding the quality of the research environment for PGRs could be addressed via this route.

13-14/30 Integrity tutorial for postgraduate research students

The Committee **considered** proposals for an integrity tutorial for postgraduate research students (URC.13-14/23). It **noted** the need to broaden the scope of integrity issues considered at this level, compared to undergraduates.

The Committee **agreed** to support the proposals, and further **recommended** that:

- (a) care should be taken to use terminology which spoke to the PGR experience eg avoiding references to term time
- (b) that the tutorial should address research data management considerations.

13-14/31 Research Grant Income (FOIA exempt)

13-14/32 Report on declining industrial research income (FOIA exempt)

13-14/33 Reports from Committee members

The Committee **noted** that this was the Chair's final meeting as PVCR, and thanked him for his leadership. The Chair expressed formal thanks to colleagues from Research and Enterprise, Research Strategy and Policy and Research Grants and Contracts for their work in supporting research at the University.

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

13-14/34 Report on the N8 mid-term review (Confidential)

13-14/35 Minutes of the meeting of the Research Priming Fund Committee held on 18 July 2013

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Research Priming Fund Committee held on 18 July 2013 (URC.13-14/27).

13-14/36 Allocation of Research Pump Priming Funds 2013-14

The Committee **received** for information a summary of the allocation of Research Pump Priming Funds for 2013/14 (URC.13-14/28).

13-14/37 Minutes of the meeting of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee held on 16 April 2013

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee held on 16 April 2013 (URC.13-14/29). Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2013 would be included on the next Research Committee agenda.

13-14/38 Date of next meeting

Details of the next meeting were **noted**: Wednesday 15 January 2014 at 2.15pm in HG17.

November 2013

Alice Wakely

Research Strategy and Policy Officer