

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2014

Present: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)
Professor Stuart Bell
Professor Mark Ormrod (M13-14/80 – M13-14/95 only)
Professor Michael Beaney
Professor Karl Claxton
Dr Jon Finch
Professor Timo Gans
Professor Paul Kaye (M13-14/85 – M13-14/94 only)
Professor Jennifer Potts
Dr Sarah Rees-Jones
Professor Martin Smith
Professor Jo Swaffield (M13-14/80 – M13-14/95 only)
The Director of Research and Enterprise (MM13-14/84 onwards)
The Research Strategy and Policy Manager

In attendance: Ms Liz Critchley (M13-14/86 only)
Ms Nina Pirozek (M13-14/86 only)
Ms Liz Waller (M13-14/90 only)
Ms Heidi Fraser-Krauss (M13-14/91 only)
Dr Eszter Papp (M13-14/92 only)
Mr Philip Morris (M13-14/95 only)
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Business and Community), Professor Fulton and the Research Grants and Contracts Manager.

13-14/80 Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2014 were **approved** (RC.13-14/59).

13-14/81 REF Equality Audit report

Arising from M13-14/65, the Research Strategy and Policy Manager **reported** that the Athena Swan working group had requested further analysis of the data.

13-14/82 HEFCE Policy for Open Access in the Post-2014 Research Excellence Framework

Arising from M13-14/68, the Chair **reported** that the University had tabled notes on the HEFCE Policy for Open Access in the Post-2014 Research Excellence Framework at a meeting of Russell Group PVCs, for communication to HEFCE. Strong representations had been made to HEFCE by the Group as a whole in relation to mandating the date of acceptance, as opposed to date of publication, for the point at which an output must be deposited.

13-14/83 Reports from the Director of Research and Enterprise

Arising from M13-14/73 and M13-14/74, it was **noted** that the reports from the Director of Research and Enterprise considered at the previous meeting had been circulated to Science and Social Science DRC Chairs.

13-14/84 Oral report from the Chair

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Chair regarding recent developments. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) Three nominations for a new URC representative from the Sciences had been received to date, and at least two were expected in relation to the Arts and Humanities vacancy. Senate members would therefore be asked to vote on their preferred candidates. The deadline for making nominations was **noted**: Friday 27 June. The Committee further **noted** that Dr Rees Jones would be standing down in July (rather than remaining in attendance until December as originally proposed), and the Chair thanked her for her contribution to its work.
- (b) The Russell Group PVCs had discussed a paper presenting a range of options for the REF2020 process, and in particular the use of metrics, which had proved divisive. The Committee **noted** that the issue was open to debate, and that the US company Academic Analytics would be visiting

the University shortly to demonstrate software to support research evaluation.

- (c) Annual departmental report data had been circulated to departments and reports were due in by 31 July.
- (d) Bids against Research Priming Fund additional capital for 2013/14 had significantly exceeded the amount available; the funding decisions reached by the PVCRC and the ACs would be communicated shortly, to enable spending by 31 July. A call for bids for the next round had been launched, with a deadline of 1 July.
- (e) The Impact Conference originally planned for 30 June had been postponed, and a new date in September was being sought, in line with the development of an Impact Statement as part of the new Research Strategy.

13-14/85 University Research Strategy (Confidential and FOIA exempt)

13-14/86 Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure

The Committee **considered** a proposed University Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures (RC.13-14/64). Ms Critchley and Ms Pirozek attended the meeting to speak to the item.

The Committee **noted** that the drafting process had been informed by:

- A review of research misconduct policies and procedures at a number of other Russell Group institutions
- A review of recent cases of research misconduct at the University
- Consultation with the PVCRC, the Registrar, Academic Co-Ordinators, the Research Strategy and Policy Office, the Research Grants and Contracts Office and representatives of the UCU. Discussions with the latter were ongoing, and therefore the policy might be subject to a number of minor changes prior to submission to Senate in July.

In the course of discussion, the following points were **noted**:

- (a) The reference in 1.5 of the Policy to 'minor misdemeanours' was an inappropriate definition of research misconduct, and further work was needed to clarify the distinction between misconduct and capability issues.
- (b) The identification of research misconduct required specialist knowledge, and would therefore be more appropriately handled by the Research Strategy and Policy Office and the Research Grants and Contracts Office rather than HR.

- (c) There was a need to ensure that the wording took account of differing requirements in relation to notifying funders of potential and/or actual cases of misconduct

ACTION: LC to work with AMG in response to these points

The Committee **decided** to delegate final approval of the University Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures to the Chair.

13-14/87 York Graduate School (Sensitive Information)

13-14/88 Code of Practice on Research Integrity

The Committee **considered** a proposed University Code of Practice on Research Integrity (RC.13-14/62). Professor Martin Smith spoke to the item as a member of the working group which had contributed towards the drafting of the Code.

In the course of discussion, the following points were **noted**:

- (a) The Committee clarified that section 2.3 (e) related to the need to take into account the different ethical context when undertaking research overseas, and that this might well include the need to secure formal ethical approval within the country in question as well as from the University. The need to reconsider the use of the phrase ‘developing countries’ was **noted**. It was suggested that the principle of ‘proportionate means to a legitimate end’ should be applied when reconciling differences between countries’ ethical frameworks.
- (b) Section 4.1.4. relating to freedom to publish could potentially raise issues in the future in relation to working with industry, and could result in lost funding opportunities.
- (c) The importance of bringing the Code of Practice to the attention of those making use of the University’s research facilities on behalf of a party other than the University. It was **noted** that ethical approval by the University was only required for research undertaken in its name.
- (d) It was suggested that definitions of authorship (section 4.2) should follow current REF guidelines; however, the Committee **noted** that guidance varied across the REF panels.

ACTION: AW to make modifications in the light of these comments, working with MS and SB

The Committee **decided** to delegate final signoff of the University Code of Practice on Research Integrity to Chair's action.

13-14/89 Governance of research ethics

The Committee **received** an update on developments in this area and **considered** a revised draft of the University's Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance (RC.13-14/63). Dr Wakely spoke to the item.

The Committee **noted** that significant progress had been made in strengthening ethics governance structures, in particular in relation to the Physical Sciences.

In relation to the revised Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance, the Committee discussed the role of DRCs in assuring that projects were referred for ethical review where necessary. While it was acknowledged that the fundamental responsibility for identifying ethical considerations and securing ethical approval lay with the PI, the Committee **noted** that there was a need for a further level of assurance in order to improve compliance. Departmental peer review processes should include identification of any ethical considerations, and should flag up to the PI the need to address these considerations and refer the project for formal review by a University ethics subcommittee. As such, the revised Code proposed the DRC Chair as the departmental representative best placed to endorse the ethical assurances provided to Research Grants and Contracts by the PI. It was further **noted** that further discussion was due to take place with Research Grants and Contracts to finalise the best point at which to check ethical compliance centrally, and that the finalised Code of Practice would reflect this. The Committee also **noted** the importance of awareness-raising and training in improving compliance.

The Committee **noted** that the draft Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance would be finalised in light of its comments and a parallel consultation with the University Ethics Committee and its subcommittees. It **decided** to delegate final sign-off of the revised Code to the Chair.

13-14/90 Policy on Research Data Management and proposals for implementation

The Committee **considered** a revised policy on Research Data Management and proposals for implementation (RC.13-14/67 and RC.13-14/68). Ms Waller attended the meeting to speak to the item.

The Committee **noted** revisions to the policy made in response to its comments at the previous meeting. It further **noted** that:

- (a) A retention period of 10 years from the date of last requested access was proposed;
- (b) It had been agreed with the PVCRC that at the current time, existing mechanisms for data storage would be used rather than developing a purpose-built repository;
- (c) Concerns regarding the role of DRCs were picked up in the accompanying implementation paper: support would be offered to develop reasonable mechanisms to discharge these responsibilities taking account of departmental differences. The Committee **noted** that it would be helpful to link to the implementation plan explicitly from the policy in order to clarify issues of this nature.

The Committee further **noted** plans for implementation, which adopted a pragmatic approach driven by baseline compliance, over a four year period, with focus on infrastructure and advocacy and training. The deadline for compliance with EPSRC requirements - 1 May 2015 – was **noted** in particular. The Committee **agreed** that effective tools and shared practice were key in order to avoid burdensome procedures, and **noted** that resource implications would need to be addressed in due course.

The Committee **approved** the Policy for Research Data Management and proposals for its implementation.

13-14/91 Research Computing Support

The Committee **considered** a paper on options for providing and sustaining Research Computing Support at the University (RC.13-14/71). Ms Fraser-Krauss attended the meeting to speak to the item.

The Committee **noted** the relative weakness of the University's centrally provided research computing support, and that there was evidence of significant unmet need through demand for the small scale facilities already in existence. In the course of discussion, the following points were **noted**:

- (a) The partnership model was worth pursuing in order to support better the use of existing facilities; however, it was not a viable option in isolation. The N8 HPC facility in particular was designed to a very high specification which was not appropriate for all projects. Investment in central infrastructure and training would help to increase appropriate use of shared facilities.
- (b) A key element of a centrally supported service would be staffing. An additional three posts would be needed (aligning with the subject clusters) – these could be managed as secondment opportunities.
- (c) Researchers would need to include an element in their grant applications to buy in to the central facility: further discussion with Research Grants and Contracts would be needed in terms of how this would be managed operationally.
- (d) It had not been possible to model the additional income which central investment would generate.
- (e) Departments would be able to continue to operate their own facilities alongside central provision if desired; however, the latter presented an opportunity to relieve the burden on research groups where specialist services were not required. Takeup would depend upon building trust.
- (f) Storage and archiving would be addressed in terms of physical facilities; however, research data management requirements were a different issue and it was appropriate that these were being addressed as a separate project.

The Committee **agreed** that a mixed model of central, departmental and partnership provision was appropriate, and to this end **decided to recommend** development of a centrally funded shared infrastructure.

13-14/92 Feasibility and potential of a University presence in Brussels (Confidential)

13-14/93 Research funding analysis (Sensitive Information and FOIA exempt)

13-14/94 Report from the Director of Research and Enterprise

13-14/95 Research Development Team

The Committee **considered** a paper on the work of the Research Development Team (RC.13-14/74). Mr Morris attended the meeting to speak to the item. The Committee **noted** the following:

- The paper had been drafted by the Research Development Team in consultation with the Academic Co-Ordinators, the Directors of HRC and

ReCCS, the Director of Research and Enterprise, and the PVCR, and it was proposed to circulate the paper more widely to departments and the relevant support services for comment.

- A finalised version could be made available as a descriptor of the Team's services, presented by cluster if appropriate. Further work was still needed to encourage departments to engage with the Team.
- Further work was also needed to determine appropriate measures of the Team's success.

In the course of discussion, the following points were **noted**:

- (a) More information was needed on how the Team's work fitted with research support provision at departmental level. It was **noted** that work was needed more broadly within the University to map the latter, and some preliminary mapping had been carried out by the Research Grants and Contracts Office.
- (b) The paper needed to articulate a more strategic focus for the work of the Team given its limited resource, based around the subject clusters i.e. working across disciplines, and taking key funding bodies into account. It was **agreed** that individual departments should manage their own research performance and be appropriately resourced to do so. The Committee **noted** that operational support for research, including mechanisms for prioritisation, was being addressed as part of the development of a new Research Strategy.
- (c) The reporting structures needed to include greater overarching academic oversight, including Research Committee and the PVCR.
- (d) It would be helpful to have greater detail on the Team's working methods e.g. attending DRC and DRC cluster meetings.

The Committee **agreed** that it would be helpful to circulate the paper more widely, once revised in the light of the Committee's comments, in versions tailored to the needs of the audience in question.

ACTION: PM

It further **agreed** that once further information was available on mapping research support provision at departmental level, the Team would need to align its activity with these structures.

13-14/96 **Compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity**

The Committee **considered** proposals for training provision relating to research integrity for 2014/15 (RC.13-14/65), and a paper on compliance with

the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity, including a draft Statement to Council on Research Integrity for 2013/14 (RC.13-14/66). Dr Wakely spoke to the item.

The Committee **noted** that the University was on track to be compliant with the Concordat for 2014/15, including in relation to the proposed training provision. It **decided** to delegate sign-off of the University's assurances of compliance to HEFCE in August to the Chair.

The Committee **approved** the Statement to Council on Research Integrity for 2013/14, as required by the Concordat, noting that it incorporated the annual statement on research misconduct which had been considered by the Committee as a separate item in previous years. It **noted** that the Statement would be made public on the University's webpages following Council's meeting on 25 July.

The Committee further **noted** that compliance with the Concordat, particularly in terms of training provision, was currently only assured for 2014/15, owing to dependence on HEIF funding for key posts associated with research integrity; and that the broader issue of the sustainability of HEIF-funded posts was under consideration by the University.

13-14/97 Federal Wide Assurance (US Funding) (Confidential)

13-14/98 RCUK Research Outcomes Harmonisation Project

The Committee **considered** a paper on the implications of the RCUK Research Outcomes Harmonisation Project for the University of York (RC.13-14/70). The Research Strategy and Policy Manager spoke to the item.

The Committee **noted** that representations had been made to RCUK regarding the inefficiency of not having a bulk upload facility as part of the preferred outcomes system, ResearchFish, and that assurances that a facility would be in place by September were unrealistic. The Committee **agreed** to pursue the first short term option proposed i.e. manual data entry supported centrally through a temporary position.

13-14/99 Oral reports from the Academic Co-Ordinators

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Academic Co-Ordinator in the Social Sciences and **noted** that the University had been successful in obtaining an Impact Accelerator Award.

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

13-14/100 Policy on the Publication of Research

The Committee **received** for information the finalised University Policy on the Publication of Research (RC.13-14/75).

13-14/101 Policy on Research Degrees

The Committee **received** for information details of revisions to the University's Policy on Research Degrees (RC.13-14/76).

13-14/102 Annual reports from Collaborative International Research Centres

The Committee **received** for information annual reports from Collaborative International Research Centres (RC.13-14/77).

13-14/103 Annual Reports from Interdepartmental Research Centres

The Committee **received** for information annual reports from Interdepartmental Research Centres not reviewed in 2013/14 (RC.13-14/78).

13-14/104 Procedure for monitoring the ethical conduct of ESRC-funded projects

The Committee **received** for information details of the University's procedure for monitoring the ethical conduct of ESRC projects (RC.13-14/79).

13-14/105 RCUK training grant publications

The Committee **received** for information a paper reviewing the new RCUK training grant publications (RC.13-14/80).

13-14/106 Meetings for 2014/15

The Committee **noted** details of its meetings for 2014/15:

- Friday 19th September 2014 at 2.15pm, HG17 Heslington Hall
- Wednesday 15th October 2014 at 2.15pm, HG17 Heslington Hall
- Wednesday 26th November 2014 at 2.15pm, YH/110 Research Centre for Social Science
- Wednesday 14th January 2015 at 2.15pm, HG17 Heslington Hall
- Wednesday 11th March 2015 at 9.30am, YH/110 Research Centre for Social Science
- Wednesday 29th April 2015 at 2.15pm, HG09 Heslington Hall
- Wednesday 10th June 2015 at 2.15pm, HG17 Heslington Hall

June 2014

Alice Wakely

Research Integrity Strategy and Policy Officer