

# UNIVERSITY OF YORK

## RESEARCH COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2015

**Present:** The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)  
The Dean of the York Graduate School  
Professor Stuart Bell  
Professor Brian Fulton (M14-15/67, item (d) onwards)  
Professor Michael Beaney  
Professor John Clark  
Dr Jonathan Finch  
Professor Timo Gans  
Professor Jennifer Potts  
Professor Martin Smith (M14-15/64 – 75 only)  
Professor Jo Swaffield  
The Research Strategy and Policy Manager

**In attendance:** Ms Elizabeth Garcha (MM14-15/64 – 68 only)  
Ms Melanie Macrae (M14-15/70 only)  
Dr Maggie McGowan (M14-15/72 only)  
Dr Eszter Papp  
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Claxton, Edwards and Ormrod, and from the Director of Research and Enterprise and the Research Grants and Contracts Manager.

#### 14-15/64 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2015

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2015 (RC.14-15/37).

#### 14-15/65 Committee action log March 2015

The Committee **considered** a progress report against its action log for 2014/15 (RC.14-15/38). The following points were **noted**:

### *Completed actions*

- M14-15/23: the summary of N8 activity was now available on the web at: <https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/about-re/who-to-contact-in-the-business-development-team/n8-activity-summary/>.
- M14-15/59: although the Library team was developing systems for research data management, there was a reported lack of clarity regarding the actions required of DRCs in order to comply with EPSRC requirements by 1 May. It was **noted** that the RSPO had picked up this issue with the Library for further action.

### **Redacted paragraph – sensitive information**

### *Outstanding actions*

- M13-14/59: analysis had been undertaken by Professor Swaffield and needed to be written up formally for consideration by the Athena Swan working group, reporting to URC by the end of the academic year.  
**ACTION: JS working with AG**
- M14-15/16: some of the posts required for development of central research computing support have been included for funding via MTP.
- M14-15/21: informal work around compiling information on knowledge and experience relating to funders was in progress.
- The proposed timing for actions relating to internal peer review (M14-15/32) and governance of IRCs (M14-15/38) was **noted**.

### **14-15/66 Oral report from the Chair**

The Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) Ms Garcha **reported** that Research Forum had met on 17 February to look at REF2014 data and discuss departments' experiences of the process. Copies of the slides had been circulated to Chairs of DRCs and the RSPO would digest the notes from the meeting. A questionnaire had been circulated to departments to capture the institutional memory of REF2014 and some useful responses had been received to date.
- (b) Ms Garcha **reported** that the Impact Conference would be held on the afternoon of 19 March in the Ron Cooke Hub, focusing on Impact and REF, and on developing and building Impact. To date, 160 colleagues had registered. Further information would be circulated to Committee members.

- (c) Dr Wakely **reported** that the Research Integrity (RI) Forum had met for the first time on 28 January: Caroline Hunter and Charlotte O'Brien from the Law School had presented a session on conflicts of interest. 28 people from a range of departments attended, including both staff and students, and feedback had been positive. Session materials had been made available on the research integrity webpages. The next session, on 'Keeping sensitive data confidential in the internet age', would be held on 30 April led by Celia Kitzinger from Sociology: details would be circulated via Chairs of DRCs in due course.

The Committee **noted** the importance of raising awareness of research integrity issues, and that the Faculty Deans and Chairs of DRCs were able to play a role in encouraging colleagues to attend RI Forum events, informed by attendance records as an indication of departmental representation, particularly where need had been identified. The Committee further **noted** that the RI Forum had raised issues regarding how departmental Registers of Interests translated into meaningful practice, and that there was further work to be done in this area, particularly in relation to consultancy.

The Committee also **noted** broader issues regarding effective communication between the centre and departments and the opportunity for improvement in this area via the Faculty Boards. The Committee **decided** to ask SMG to consider these issues further and for the outcome to be reported back to URC.  
**ACTION: Chair**

- (d) The Chair **reported** that it was proposed that all projects involving human tissue and operating under a National Research Ethics Committee license rather than the University's license should nevertheless adhere to the University's quality processes. A paper would come to the Committee's next meeting, and the Committee would be asked to sign off the University's processes formally.
- (e) It was **noted** that a paper on internal peer review processes would come to the Committee in June.
- (f) The Committee **noted** the importance of having faculty representation at its meeting: the Chair was discussing a formal system of 'alternates' with the Faculty Deans, to be introduced by the start of the new academic year.

The Committee **noted** that Professors Beaney, Claxton and Potts would complete their terms of office at the end of July. The Chair had agreed with

the Governance Officer that the vacancies would be advertised at the May meeting of Senate, to be followed by a nomination and (where necessary) election process, to ensure that new members were appointed by July. This would enable the Committee to continue to conduct its business effectively over the summer period as necessary (e.g. for the ADRR process). It was clarified that these new members were not representatives of their own departments, but were elected by Senate to ensure academic representation across the faculties. The Chair prompted members to encourage suitably experienced colleagues to put themselves forward for nomination once the vacancies had been advertised via Senate.

(g) The Chair **reported** that two out of the seven proposed Research Champions had been appointed, and would start in the post over the summer. Four more interviews were due to be held over the coming month; further nominations for the Health and Wellbeing role were requested. A formal University announcement would be made once all seven Champions were in place.

(h) The Chair **reported** that the Nurse Review of Research Councils had been published, and a response from the University requested by 17 April. The Committee **agreed** that departments would be asked to feed into the University's response via faculty level meetings of Chairs of DRCs.  
**ACTION: AG to confirm dates with Faculty Deans' PAs and send paperwork**

**14-15/67 Feedback from REF2014 panels (Confidential and FOIA exempt)**

**14-15/68 Analysis of the REF2014 Impact submission (FOIA exempt)**

**14-15/69 Research Strategy implementation plan and timetable**

**Redacted paragraph – sensitive information**

**14-15/70 Sourcing research funding opportunities**

The Committee **considered** a paper on sourcing research funding opportunities (RC.14-15/46). Ms Macrae attended the meeting to speak to the item.

The Committee **noted** that a review had been undertaken of the role of central research services in helping staff identify appropriate funding, looking at current practice within the University and at peer institutions. The review had found that the current system, predominantly departmentally-based, worked well, but that

there was scope for greater support from the centre. Two of the possible proposals were **noted** in particular: improvements to web information, and development of a deadlines calendar to support horizon-scanning. It was further **noted** that additional resource would be needed to set up the latter.

The Committee **noted** the need to take faculty level organisation into account, in order to avoid duplication between departments and acknowledge overlap between subject areas. It further **noted** that the Faculty Deans were drawing up proposals regarding the role of faculty groupings of DRC Chairs: it was **agreed** that the issues raised by this paper should feed into discussions.

**ACTION: Faculty Deans in conjunction with Chair and HW**

The Committee further **noted** that:

- The future role of the Research Champions should also be taken into account;
- It would be useful to include internal deadlines on a funding calendar. The Committee **noted** the importance of adherence to these deadlines: failure to do so put the University's processes at risk;
- It would be helpful to identify particular groups of colleagues in need of support and target additional efforts accordingly.

The Committee thanked Ms Macrae for her work in this area.

#### 14-15/71 **Provisional proposals for the 2015 ADRR process**

The Committee **considered** provisional proposals for the 2015 ADRR process (RC14-15.42). It **noted** that:

- The proposals were based on the pilot procedure from the previous year, with amendments in the light of feedback, including to the question set;
- The ADRR process underpinned implementation of the Research Strategy, as a means of monitoring the effective management of research within departments;
- Proposals for the appointment of new members to the Committee by July would enable the smooth conduct of the ADRR process over the summer.

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

- (a) Assessment of the quality of research outputs: clarification was needed that informal mechanisms (e.g. discussions with individuals about where they are publishing, as part of performance management) were an acceptable starting point from which to build in due course;

- (b) If it was difficult for some DRCs to meet in July, it was acceptable for the departmental management team to sign off the ADRR, as long as DRC members and the Head of Department had had an opportunity to comment on a draft version of the report;
- (c) It might be helpful to ask about departmental workload models and how research was reflected in them. The Committee noted, however, that the University was still some distance from establishing a standard institutional model and thus was not in a position to offer substantial guidance on this matter;
- (d) Although there was little room for manoeuvre in terms of the timescale for pulling together data in collaboration with the Business Intelligence Unit, it would be helpful to give departments advance notification of the questions relating to management processes so that they had more time to provide a considered response.

The Committee **noted** that finalised proposals would be submitted for approval at its next meeting in April. It further **noted** that a paper on research performance triggers would come to the same meeting.

#### 14-15/72 **Internal funding streams relating to research and impact**

The Committee **considered** an evaluation of internal funding streams relating to research and impact (RC.14-15/47). Dr McGowan attended the meeting to speak to the item.

The Committee **noted** that the evaluation had included funding streams operating at University level, but not those managed externally (e.g. White Rose, N8) or by departments. It **agreed** that it was helpful to have a summary of what was available centrally. It was further suggested that the summary should also include the Morrell Trust fund for projects based on toleration.

The Committee **noted** that the new University Research Strategy presented an opportunity to review the operation of central funds and their potential role in supporting the Research Themes. It further **noted** that although many of the funds were restricted in what they could be used for, there was scope for looking at:

- Co-ordination of the timing of calls and selection procedures;
- Combining different funds to decrease the administrative burden
- Co-ordination of communication about the funding available;
- Using internal funds to lever external investment more effectively;
- The degree of risk associated with particular funding sources (eg HEIF).

The Committee thanked Dr McGowan for her work and **approved** the paper's proposals for carrying out further work in this area.

**ACTION: University Priming Funds working group, in conjunction with Chair, Faculty Deans and Research Theme Champions (once appointed)**

**14-15/73 YCCSA: strategy and governance (Sensitive Information)**

**14-15/74 York JEOL Nanocentre review (Sensitive Information)**

**14-15/75 Applications and awards to end January 2015 (FOIA exempt)**

**14-15/76 In-year income to end January 2015 (FOIA exempt)**

The Committee **noted** a report on in year income to end January 2015 (RC.14-15/45).

**14-15/77 Reports from the Faculty Deans**

It was **agreed** that from the next meeting onwards, oral reports from the Faculty Deans would be replaced by receipt of minutes of the faculty-level meetings of DRC Chairs, as Category II business.

The success of two large scale EPSRC bids was **reported**: the Digital Creativity Hub bid, and TARGeTED - Tacking Anti-microbial Resistance through Goal-Orientated Thinking in the EPS Disciplines. There had also been numerous successful EPSRC bids at departmental level.

**14-15/78 Report from the Dean of the Graduate School**

It was **noted** that the York Graduate Research School Board would report via URC to Senate: minutes would be received as Category II business from June onwards.

The Committee further **noted** that NERC would be visiting the University on 27 April, to include a tour of related departments.

**14-15/79 Report from the Director of Research and Enterprise**

The Committee **noted** that a written report from the Director of Research and Enterprise would be submitted to its next meeting.

## **CATEGORY II BUSINESS**

**14-15/80 University Impact Statement**

The Committee **received** for information the final version of the University Impact Statement (RC.14-15/48).

**14-15/81 Minutes of the meeting of the Research Priming Fund Committee held on 11 February 2015 (Confidential & FOI Exempt)**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Research Priming Fund Committee held on 11 February 2015 (RC.14-15/49).

**14-15/82 Summary of the allocation of Research Priming Funding for the January 2015 round (FOI exempt)**

The Committee **received** for information a summary of the allocation of Research Priming Funding for the January 2015 round (RC.14-15.50).

**14-15/83 Next meeting**

Details of the next meeting were **noted**: Tuesday 21 April 2015 at 2.15pm in HG09, Heslington Hall.

**March 2015**

**Dr Alice Wakely**

**Research Integrity Officer**