

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2015

Present: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair) (M14-15/84-92 only)
The Dean of the York Graduate Research School
The Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences
(Acting Chair for M14-15/93-99)
The Dean of the Faculty of the Sciences (M14-15/84 & 85a only)
The Dean of the Faculty of the Arts and Humanities
Professor Michael Beaney
Professor John Clark
Professor Karl Claxton
Professor Jason Edwards
Professor Timo Gans
Professor Jennifer Potts
Professor Martin Smith
Professor Jo Swaffield
The Director of Research and Enterprise
The Research Strategy and Policy Manager
The Research Grants and Contracts Manager

In attendance: The Director of Finance (M14-15/84 only)
Mr Phil Wiles
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Finch.

14-15/84 **Presentation on research funding (CONFIDENTIAL)**

14-15/85 **REF 2014: feedback to departments (CONFIDENTIAL)**

14-15/86 **Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2015 were **approved** (RC.14-15/51).

14-15/87 **Research Committee action log**

The Committee **noted** a progress report against its action log for 2014/15 (RC.14-15/52). It further **noted** that the University and the N8 had both submitted responses to the Nurse review: copies were available to members on request.

14-15/88 **Oral report from the Chair**

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

- (a) Professor John Clark and Professor Martin Smith would be representing Research Committee on a group chaired by the Dean of the York Graduate Research School to consider an online research integrity tutorial, currently under development by the Academic Support Office. The group would be asked to make a recommendation to Senate via the York Graduate Research School Board regarding formal approval of the tutorial and its establishment as a requirement for PGRs from October 2015.
- (b) The Impact Conference held on 19 March had been well attended, with substantial feedback received. The University's Research Impact Officer was in discussion with colleagues about further action. The importance of impact activities tailored to researchers at different stages in their careers had been noted.
- (c) Five out of the seven proposed Research Champions had now been appointed, with another appointment pending and one vacancy remaining. A University-wide announcement was anticipated at the beginning of June.

14-15/89 **Annual departmental research reports 2015**

The Committee **considered** finalised proposals for annual departmental research reports 2015 (RC.14-15/54). Following discussion, it was **decided** that part-year data for 2015 should be included. The Committee **approved** the proposals, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) The question regarding procedures for reviewing the quality of published research outputs should also ask about the timescale of such reviews, given that departments should be reviewing quality on a regular basis;
- (b) Provided that the timing of the two processes aligned, a question should be added asking departments to address any issues arising from their formal feedback on their REF2014 performance;

- (c) Another question should be included, asking departments how they are deploying resources in order to maximise 4* outputs;
- (d) The reporting format should include provision for formal signoff by the Head of Department;
- (e) There needed to be a longer window of time for both meetings of Committee members in faculty groups and feedback to departments by the Faculty Deans to take place.

ACTION: RSPO

14-15/90 Research performance triggers

The Committee **considered** a paper on research performance triggers (RC.14-15/55). The following points were **noted**:

- The Vice-Chancellor had asked Research Committee to develop the guidance to be used in parallel with the Teaching Expectations Trigger document, for consideration by Senate;
- A number of Heads of Department and Departmental Research Committee Chairs had requested guidance in this area;
- The paper would be discussed with union representatives prior to submission to Senate;
- The University's Performance Excellence project was setting out overall expectations to take account of the balance between research, teaching and administration.

In the course of discussion, the Committee **decided** that further work was needed in this area prior to submission of the paper to Senate, in response to the following comments:

- (a) The paper needed an introduction providing context for the guidance, similar to that prefacing the Teaching Expectations Trigger document.

ACTION: Chair

- (b) Statements in relation to retraction needed to be nuanced, given that retraction could be necessary for reasons other than poor research conduct.
- (c) Although it was necessary to have generic University-level expectations for interpretation by departments according to the discipline, there was a risk that lack of clarity could protect poor performance.
- (d) The effectiveness of the guidance depended on having clear research performance expectations articulated within all departments, underpinned by fair and transparent mechanisms to support staff in meeting them e.g. allocation of PGR students, workload models. It was **noted** that agreement still had to be

reached within some departments regarding specific expectations, and that some departments would welcome support in this area. The importance of sign-off by the department as a whole was further **noted**. It was suggested that the ADRR question relating to research performance expectations should clarify the Committee's own expectations of departments in this area, and should ask about the process by which departments have developed their own research performance expectations and communicated them to staff.

ACTION: Chair, Faculty Deans and AG

14-15/91 Research Strategy implementation plan

The Committee **received** an update on development of the Research Strategy implementation plan (RC.14-15/56).

14-15/92 Submission deadlines for research applications

Redacted paragraph – sensitive information

14-15/93 Research involving human tissue: University policy and procedures

The Committee **considered** a paper on University policy and procedures regarding research involving human tissue (RC.14-15/58). The Committee **approved** the University's HTA Quality Management Manual and **decided** that all projects with NREC approval should be required to adhere to the procedures detailed in the Manual.

14-15/94 Report from Research and Enterprise

The Committee **received** a report on recent activities in Research and Enterprise (RC.14-15/59). It thanked Ms Brassington for her work on the Digital Hub.

14-15/95 Update from the York Graduate Research School

The Dean of the York Graduate Research School **reported** the following:

(a) The York Graduate Research School would be launched formally on 8 October 2015;

Secretary's note: the date of the launch has subsequently been changed to 23 September 2015.

(b) A series of meetings was being held with Faculty Boards and with departments to identify and discuss current issues relating to postgraduate research students;

(c) The University's policy on making theses available online was under review. In particular, it was intended to involve supervisors more closely in the decision-making process, and to introduce formal redaction procedures.

It was **noted** that from the next meeting of the Committee onwards, the York Graduate Research School would report via the York Graduate Research School Board minutes as a Category II item.

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

14-15/96 Meeting of the HRC Departmental Research Chairs Subgroup 17 February 2015

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the HRC Departmental Research Chairs Subgroup held on 17 February 2015 (RC.14-15/60).

14-15/97 Meeting of the Science Faculty Research Group, 17 March 2015

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Science Faculty Research Group held on 17 March 2015 (RC.14-15/61).

14-15/98 Report from the Social Science Faculty Research Group

The Committee **noted** that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Science Faculty Research Group held on 26 March would be available for the next Research Committee meeting in June.

14-15/99 Next meeting

Details of the next meeting were **noted**: Wednesday 10 June 2015 at 2.15pm in HG17, Heslington Hall.

aw/aw
April 2015