

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2015

Present: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)
The Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences
The Dean of the Faculty of the Sciences
The Dean of the Faculty of the Arts and Humanities
The Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of the Social Sciences
The Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of the Sciences
The Dean of the York Graduate Research School
Professor Nik Brown
Professor Jason Edwards
Professor Timo Gans
Dr Mary Leng
The Director of Research & Enterprise
The Deputy Director of Research & Enterprise
The Research Strategy and Policy Manager

In attendance: Ms Kate O'Sullivan (M15-16/16 only)
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Finch, Dr Giles, Professor McGuire and Professor Swaffield.

15-16/16 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2015

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2015 (RC.15-16/13).

15-16/17 Membership and terms of reference

The Chair welcomed the Associate Deans (Research) to the Committee.

Arising from M15-16/01, the Committee **noted** that, following reorganisation of the Research & Enterprise Directorate, Committee representation now included the Deputy Director of Research & Enterprise role rather than the Research Grants and

Contracts Manager role, since the new Deputy role had oversight of research grants and contracts and the rest of research support services. The Committee **noted** that this change would be formally reported to Senate for approval.

15-16/18 Statement on Research Performance Expectations and Performance Triggers

Arising from M15-16/07, the Chair **reported** that a further iteration of the Statement on Research Performance Expectations and Performance Triggers, modified in the light of the Committee's comments, had been approved by Senate subject to further minor revisions. A finalised version of the Statement would be circulated to all members of Senate shortly for information.

15-16/19 Annual Departmental Research Reviews 2014/15

Arising from M15-16/08, the Committee **received** an update from the Faculty Deans on providing feedback to departments on their annual departmental research reviews for 2014/15. The Committee **noted** the following:

Arts and Humanities

Written feedback had been provided to all departments, and in some cases meetings had been arranged to discuss the feedback further, involving the Faculty Dean, the relevant URC panel member, the DRC Chair, and where deemed necessary, the Head of Department. This round of meetings was due to be completed soon, and written records of the meetings were being lodged with the RSPO.

It was further reported that one department had been asked to rewrite its ADRR report: this had now been submitted and feedback was in train.

Social Sciences

Meetings were being scheduled with departments, involving the DRC Chair, the Faculty Dean, the Associate Dean (Research) and the relevant URC panel member, to feed back and discuss the panel's comments. It was expected that this round of meetings would be completed by January. The Chair clarified that IEE and PRDU would not be included in this process.

Sciences

Chairs of DRC and Heads of Department had been notified that feedback was to come, and the intention was to complete the process by the end of the calendar year.

The Committee **noted** that now a feedback process had been established, meetings with departments could be scheduled in advance in subsequent years, in order to streamline the process.

The Committee **agreed** that a formal record of the feedback provided to each department for this and subsequent years should be lodged with RSPO.

ACTION: Faculty Deans and Associate Deans (Research)

The Committee further **agreed** that it would be helpful for the RSPO to audit progress in relation to departments who had been asked to produce post-REF action plans, so that these could be followed up as necessary.

ACTION: AMG to compile information and circulate to Faculty Deans

15-16/20 Research Integrity Tutorial

Arising from M15-16/10, the Dean of the York Graduate Research School **reported** the following:

- (a) Research students starting in October 2015 were expected to complete the online research integrity tutorial by their first TAP, and departments would confirm this at the meeting. Completion was automatically logged on the student record, which could be accessed by supervisors and departmental administrators via eVision. A formal check would be carried out at confirmation of enrolment: if the tutorial had not been completed, the student would not progress;
- (b) For research students starting in October 2016 onwards, the first formal progression point would fall within the first 12 months of study and completion of the tutorial would be checked at this point as a condition for progression;
- (c) To date, one third of the October 2015 PGR cohort had completed the tutorial successfully. A reminder would be sent out to all relevant students later in the month.

15-16/21 Research Committee action log

The Committee **considered** a progress report on its action log for 2015/16 (RC.15-16/14). It **noted** the following:

- (a) M14-15/21 Compilation of information on colleagues with knowledge of funders and experience of successful applications: colleagues should be encouraged to record this information in the 'Activities' section of Pure. It was acknowledged that some of this information was confidential and that relevant Pure records should therefore not be public-facing.

ACTION: AMG to check that Pure FAQs include information on how to ensure relevant 'Activities' data are private

The Committee asked the Director of Research & Enterprise to seek clarification from the Research Development Team for the next meeting on an end point for this action.

ACTION: MM

- (b) M14-15/66(c): Work on faculty structures would be led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and was due to report by the end of the calendar year.

- (c) M14-15/107: The Committee further **noted** that information from EPSRC regarding research grants and diversity had also been submitted to the Athena Swan working group for consideration, and **decided** to request a copy for consideration by Research Committee also.

ACTION: BF to send information to Chair & AMG.

- (d) M15-16/08 Clarification of the University's expectations of research-only departments: this was a live issue which had been raised at Senate, and would be addressed via the Research Strategy subset of the University Strategy Implementation Plan in Q1 of 2016.

- (e) **Redacted paragraph: sensitive information**

15-16/22 Report from the Chair

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

- (a) Funding for Project SYGMA had been approved by SMG, and a contract was under negotiation with Worktribe. Implementation had originally been

estimated to take 12-18 months, but the project team was now working towards implementation in 2016 and rollout in early 2017.

- (b) The Research Champions' presentations at the installation of the new Chancellor had been very successful. Discussions were now in train regarding how to facilitate engagement with faculties and departments. KPIs for the Champions would be in place by the end of the calendar year.
- (c) Rankings recently reported in the Times Higher were **noted** as follows: Arts and Humanities at York were ranked 25th in the world, and Life Sciences 55th in the world, both representing significant improvements over the previous year. The University was in the top 10 for income from the Research Councils for 14/15, in part owing to successful large bids to EPSRC, BBSRC and AHRC, and was second in terms of success rates, involving a broad spread of disciplines. The Committee further **noted** that a paper on RCUK success rates would be submitted to the next meeting.

Paragraph redacted - FOI EXEMPT

15-16/23 Report from the Director of Research & Enterprise

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Director of Research & Enterprise. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) The Research Development Team was providing support to the Research Champions, and dedicated administrative support was now in place;
- (b) The RSPO was focused on support for URC, a further round of RPF funding in January, and the post-REF reviews of selected departments. Staffing shortages were **noted**: the new Impact Officer was expected in January but a gap was anticipated in relation to Pure support;
- (c) Skills Forge had been formally spun out from Electronics as a company;
- (d) **Paragraph redacted - FOI EXEMPT**
- (e) **Paragraph redacted - FOI EXEMPT**
- (f) Research Grants and Contracts had completed backfill of records for the University's portfolio of awards with information on the University's

partner organisations. This would enable better management of risk and provide an overview of the University's links;

- (g) Research Grants and Contracts were co-ordinating the project group working on implementation of the University policy on grant submission deadlines, as approved by Research Committee at its June meeting. Rollout was expected to take place in January, and an information session for departmental research administrators would be held in December. In the interim, departments had been informed that submissions would no longer be accepted after 4pm on the working day before the grant deadline unless pre-agreed. The Committee **agreed** the importance of timely submission of grant applications for all concerned.

The Committee further **noted** the following:

- (h) Data were available from the Research Councils on demand management and success rates. The Committee **noted** that an overview of success rates would be presented to its next meeting, and **agreed** that more detailed information relating to individual Councils and applications would be best considered by FRGs. It **noted** that 'office rejects' were often closely related to late applications and that office rejects were undesirable. The new process changes should help in this respect, but the Associate Deans (Research) should be asked to monitor office rejects within the Faculty and consider any appropriate actions.

ACTION: Associate Deans (Research)

- (i) Skills Forge was being used by the University to record TAP and progression meetings online, enabling better reporting and compliance with University policy. Six pilots had recently been launched, with a view to full launch in January.

15-16/24 Research Strategy Implementation Plan

The Committee **considered** proposals relating to the Research Strategy Implementation Plan (RC.15-16/15). It **noted** that this Plan had been incorporated into a master implementation plan for the University Strategy as a whole, and that this had involved a number of structural amendments in order to form a coherent document and link to other activities within the institution. Adjustments had also been made in order to reflect priorities and map out realistic timescales across the University as a whole. All of the actions in the original Research Strategy Implementation Plan were retained within the University Strategy Implementation

Plan, with the exception of recognition of the contribution of QR via appropriate training. The Committee **noted** that this could be included within the Learning Needs Analysis if required. It further noted that the University Strategy Implementation Plan was a working document, and that the research elements could evolve further as needed.

The Committee **agreed** to adopt the implementation plan for research as contained within the University Strategy Implementation Plan, in place of the original Research Strategy Implementation Plan. Progress with implementation would therefore be reported to the Committee against this revised version.

In relation to the project on academic workload modelling and allocation (Key Objective 1b), the Committee **noted** that this was being led by the PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students since the teaching elements were very prescribed. The project working group included the Dean of the Faculty of the Arts and Humanities and the Research Strategy and Policy Manager in order to represent the research element. The Committee **agreed** that it should be consulted and kept informed on progress in relation to the project; it was **decided** that a progress report in relation to the research element should be provided for the Committee's next meeting.

ACTION: WMO & AMG

The Committee further **noted** that finalised proposals for a University academic workload model would come to the Committee for formal approval.

15-16/25 Learning Needs Analysis

The Committee **received** an update on the Learning Needs Analysis to support the implementation of the Research Strategy (RC.15-16/16). Ms O'Sullivan attended the meeting for this item, and the Dean of the York Graduate Research School spoke to the paper.

The Committee **noted** that the Learning Needs Analysis covered all staff and research students involved in delivery of the aspirations of the University Research Strategy. It further **noted** the project's aims, its approach to data gathering, the proposed areas of recommendation and the next steps, as set out in the paper. It was clarified that 'out of scope' recommendations could include, for example, mechanisms to incentivise experienced PIs to share knowledge more widely, or more effective signposting of provision to researchers.

The Committee **noted** that the project team was particularly keen to collect information on provision at departmental level. The Committee **agreed** that it was important to identify any duplication and encourage providers to work together where appropriate.

The Committee **noted** that recommendations would be submitted to the Steering Group, and that these would need to be signed off by Research Committee as part of its oversight of implementation of the University Research Strategy.

15-16/26 Impact Framework

The Committee **considered** a draft Impact Framework (RC.15-16/17). The Director of Research & Enterprise spoke to the item.

The Committee **noted** that the proposed Framework built on the University Impact Statement, and provided a framework within which to conduct, support and prioritise activity leading to impact. It **noted** the six proposed functions of the Framework, and that work relating to development of the 'Inform' and 'Incentivise' functions was ongoing.

In the course of discussion, the Committee **noted** that:

- (a) The purpose of the Framework was to define the foundations for the University's impact activity as a whole: specific REF requirements would be considered in due course once the scope and the timescale of the next REF exercise were known;
- (b) Strategic choices would need to be made in order to target impact activities to accelerate further in order to maximise their value;
- (c) The working group on academic workload modelling and allocation would need to consider whether impact should be considered as a separate category from research. Committee members were invited to submit comments to the Dean of the Faculty of the Arts and Humanities and the Research Strategy and Policy Manager on how impact should be conceptualised in the research arena in terms of dividing up time.

ACTION: ALL

The Committee **approved** the outline structure of the Impact Framework. In relation to the list of identified outcomes, the Committee **agreed** the following:

- 'External positive impact' was the key outcome: this should be reflected in its presentation in relation to the other outcomes;
 - References to 'new' benefits should be reworded to read 'new and sustained'.
- It was clarified that KTP opportunities for graduates included PGRs and post docs.

In relation to the proposed indicators, the Committee **agreed** the following:

- Performance in REF was a post hoc measure of success: further work was needed to develop rolling measures of engagement, particularly in relation to 'External positive impact';
- Where relevant, references to 'increase in number' should be reworded to read 'increase in number and quality';
- To return to the issue of workload implications in due course.

The Committee further **agreed** the following:

1. The approach to incentivisation should not just be post-hoc via impact awards, but should harness research development mechanisms such as pump priming and match funding, and it would be useful to have some reference to these within the Framework.
2. It was important to promote and incentivise co-authorship between supervisors and their research students across all disciplines so that impact was not lost;
3. The section on knowledge exchange should acknowledge potential benefits to students.

The Committee **noted** the four proposed follow-on activities, and the following points in particular:

- i. Given that the new Impact Officer would not be in post until January, it was unlikely that a benchmark impact report for 2014/15 would be available for the Committee in Q1 2016; however, the Committee **noted** the importance of the exercise, which would be a priority for the new appointee;
- ii. Some data on impact were already available via ADRRs and via the reporting required by ESRC and EPSRC, although this was not comprehensive. The Committee **noted** the need to exercise discretion when approaching departments for further data;

- iii. The proposed gap analysis regarding support for impact was important, particularly in relation to hands-on support at department and faculty level. The Committee **agreed** that the Associate Deans should be asked to review current provision in relation to the latter, identifying the academic and administrative staff who had a role in supporting and encouraging impact activity. This information would be made available to the new Impact Officer in the RSPO.

ACTION: Associate Deans

- iv. It was important to share good practice across faculties.

15-16/27 Preparing for the Impact element of the next REF - FOI EXEMPT

15-16/28 YCCSA: Strategy Implementation Plan – CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT

15-16/29 Research income and awards - FOI EXEMPT

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

15-16/30 Next meeting

The Committee **noted** details of the next meeting: Wednesday 9 December 2015 at 2.15pm, Room H/G17, Heslington Hall.

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November 2015