

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2016

Present: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)
Dean, Faculty of Sciences (M15-16/74 – 81 only)
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Sciences
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Professor John Clark
Dr Jonathan Finch
Professor Timo Gans
Dr Mary Leng (except M15-16/84)
Professor Martin Smith
Professor Jo Swaffield
Deputy Director of Research & Enterprise
Research Strategy and Policy Manager (M15-16/77 onwards)

In attendance: Ms Janette Colclough (RC.15-16/80 only)
Mr Dan Cashdan (RC.15-16/81 only)
Ms Kirsty Dillingham (RC.15-16/82 only)
Mr Stuart Gladwell, Research Strategy and Policy Officer
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Bell, Professor N Brown, Professor Edwards, Professor McGuire, Professor Ormrod, Professor Stoneham and Dr Mortimer.

15-16/74 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting. One instance was identified, and it was **agreed** that the member in question would leave the meeting for that item.

15-16/75 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2016

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2016 (RC.15-16/55).

15-16/76 Research Committee action log

The Committee **considered** an update on its action log (RC.15-16/56). It **noted** that completed items had been removed from the current version, although these were still recorded in the Committee's archive of papers. It further **noted** the following:

- (a) M14-15/111: A further update on grant submission processes would be provided at the Committee's next meeting, in April;
- (b) M14-15/66(c): the University Executive Board had considered the first of two papers on faculty structures at its meeting on 2 March 2016, and would consider the second paper at its April meeting. Further information would come to Research Committee in due course;
- (c) M14-15/70: Implementation of Project SYGMA would contribute towards supporting staff to identify appropriate research funding opportunities;
- (d) M14-15/107: Professor Swaffield's report on gender issues arising from REF2014 would be considered at the next meeting of the Athena Swan steering group on 10 March. It was **agreed** that the Chair would speak to the report at that meeting.
- (e) M15-16/08: Clarification of the University's expectations of research only departments would be picked up as part of the review of research entities.

Arising from M15-16/26 and M15-16/61, relating to the Academic Workload Modelling and Allocation project, the Committee **noted** that further information was needed before comments could be provided on the representation of research. The working group was due to report in April/May, and Research Committee expected to receive a copy of the report for consideration.

15-16/77 Report from the Chair on recent developments

The Committee **received** an oral report on recent developments from the Chair, noting the following:

- (a) The HEFCE grant letter from BIS regarding funding for higher education in England for 2016-17 had been published the previous week and was available on the web at: www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name_107598,en.html. In relation to research, resource for Science and Research had been ringfenced at a flat level (a cut of 3-4% in real terms), and the Research Councils were

currently discussing the implications. The UK Research Partnership Investment Fund would be continued through to 2021. References were also made to engagement with the Stern Review of REF and the findings of the Nurse Review of the Research Councils, and with the implementation of Open Access. There was a clear emphasis on efficiency.

(b) **Paragraph redacted - CONFIDENTIAL**

(c) The report on the Learning Needs Analysis had now been finalised and would be considered at the Committee's April meeting.

15-16/78 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)

The Committee **received** oral reports on recent developments from the Associate Deans (Research) as follows:

Social Sciences

- The ESRC DTP bid had been submitted, and the Social Sciences Faculty Research Group and associated individual departments were working on plans for delivery;
- The Research Development Manager for the Social Sciences, Ms Opmeer, was leaving the University in May; the role was under review prior to advertising a replacement position.

Arts & Humanities

- The HRC core team was continuing to hold a series of meetings with individual departments;
- Discussions were under way between the Associate Dean and the RSPO regarding the ADRR process for 2016;
- The HRC was sharing its practices with ReCCS to support the development of the latter.

Sciences

- The Faculty Impact group had met the previous week to share practice, and was due to meet again in May;
- Staffing levels in the central Research Development team supporting the Sciences was currently below the full complement.

15-16/79 Draft institutional response to the Stern review

The Committee **considered** a draft institutional response to the Stern review (RC.15-16/57). In the course of discussion, the following points were **noted**:

(a) Diverse views were expressed in relation to the use of metrics to assess research, further to the position currently outlined in the draft response. Although the use of metrics was straightforward in relation to some disciplines, particularly within the Sciences, resistance was expressed on behalf of the Arts & Humanities to the use of metrics to inform any form of research assessment i.e. whether in relation to decision-making regarding the allocation of QR, or in relation to broader assessments of research quality. It was further argued that a metrics-based approach would disadvantage smaller departments within the Social Sciences. However, it was also argued that metrics had the benefit of being objective and efficient, and that departments would be competing in this respect within their own disciplines - although Units of Assessment would add a further level of complication. The cost implications of pursuing diverse approaches were also noted. The Committee **agreed** the importance of peer review in undertaking meaningful assessments of research quality.

(b) **Paragraph redacted - FOI EXEMPT**

(c) Support was expressed for the argument that the definition of impact should not be refined or narrowed. It was suggested that impact could be defined more broadly to include external engagement, and that the existing requirement to link impact to specific outputs was restrictive in terms of ongoing external relationships. However, it was noted that severing this link might result in impact moving away from the institution, and an intensified staff transfer market within the sector. The Committee agreed that it was important to have clarity as soon as possible in this area so that researchers knew what they were expected to achieve.

The Committee **noted** that any further comments should be submitted to the Research Strategy and Policy Manager by the end of the week.

15-16/80 Update on Open Access for REF

The Committee **received** an update on Open Access for REF (RC.15-16/58). Ms Colclough attended the meeting for this item.

The Committee **noted** that HEFCE OA requirements for the post-2014 REF applied to articles accepted for publication from 1 April 2016. Compliance rates as indicated by the deposit of full-text into PURE had increased, but further improvement was needed. The Committee **approved** the recommendation that it should receive quarterly updates on rates of deposit as Category II business. It further **noted** that the March 2016 PURE upgrade would provide some improved functionality to support open access, and once available, the PURE REF module would enable monitoring of compliance and recording of exceptions.

The Committee **noted** that reports by department were being made available to Chairs of DRC, who would need to take action if the appropriate information was not recorded in PURE. The following points were clarified:

- It was the consensus view at national level that deposit in arXiv did not meet REF requirements, as there was no record of the version or the date of acceptance;
- Where an article was Gold Open Access, it would still need to be deposited in PURE.

The Committee **noted** that it would be helpful for departments to have a list of journals which were Open Access. Development of a live list by Jisc, in the form of the SHERPA/REF tool, was awaited. In the meantime, the SHERPA/RoMEO tool was available (www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo). The Committee further **noted** the activities planned by the Library to support compliance, including a communications campaign.

The Committee **noted** that discussions were under way between the Library, the RSPO and the Associate Deans to agree an academic-led process for identifying and handling Open Access exceptions needing further discussion, including audit logs and record keeping. There were still sector-wide issues such as image copyright which needed to be resolved. Exceptions might also need to be made regarding embargo periods, especially where research crossed disciplinary boundaries, because the embargo periods for the Sciences tended to be shorter than for the Social Sciences and the Arts & Humanities. The importance of standardised processes and consistent data was **noted**.

The Chair thanked Ms Colclough for her contribution to the meeting.

15-16/81 Demonstration of research metrics provision under development by the RSPO and the BIU

The Committee **received** a demonstration of research metrics provision under development by the RSPO and the BIU. Mr Cashdan attended the meeting to speak to this item with the Research Strategy and Policy Manager.

Previously, ADRR data from PURE relating to applications, awards and outputs had been presented to departments in Excel; the proposal was to provide these data via Tableau, enabling better visualisation and providing the opportunity for greater in-depth analysis. The Committee **noted** that the data would also be made available to Heads of Department, Chairs of DRC and Associate Deans (Research) on an ongoing basis. An anonymised version, without details of particular individuals, would also be available. For the purposes of ADRR, a snapshot for a set period would be frozen so that DRCs and URC members were working to the same data set. ADRRs would focus on the departmental rather than the individual level.

The Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) The reliability and completeness of the data were dependent on its source in PURE, which in turn pulled in data from other sources such as Agresso. In particular, in relation to awards, departments might wish to backfill information on Co-Is in Agresso;
- (b) Users would need to take account of the period between an application translating to an award, and which academic year it was logged against;
- (c) Data were double counted as necessary at individual level, but were single counted when aggregated up to department and faculty level;
- (d) There were difficulties regarding reporting against research centres since these were not currently handled consistently by the University;
- (e) Further work was needed on data relating to collaborating institutions, in relation to research outputs;
- (f) Potential links to Worktribe were under discussion.

The Committee **agreed** that these developments were very helpful, and thanked colleagues from the RSPO and BIU for their work.

The Committee also **received** a brief demonstration of SciVal, noting that it was freely available across the institution: users needed to register for access. It **noted** that SciVal enabled benchmarking of research performance against other institutions and their departments, including data on citation rates, collaboration and economic impact. Data were also publicly available at individual level. It was

suggested that a presentation on SciVal to Faculty Research Groups would be useful in due course.

15-16/82 Research Applications and Awards by Size Band and PIs – FOI EXEMPT

15-16/83 Research Priming Fund

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Research Priming Fund Committee held on 21 January 2016, including details of the Committee's terms of reference and membership for 2015/16 (RC.15-16/61-*Confidential*). It **noted** that the minutes included details of individuals' applications and should therefore be treated as confidential.

Arising from the minutes, the Committee further **noted** that:

- The model for nominating and appointing panel members was currently under review in order to manage potential conflicts of interest more efficiently; proposals to address these issues would be brought to the next meeting in April.
- Revised procedures would be introduced for managing the tracking of expenditure against awards in order to improve the accuracy of information available to the Committee in support of maintaining existing funding levels.

The Committee also **received**:

- a) A summary of allocations made at the above meeting, including an indication of how the projects funded mapped on to the Research Strategy Themes;
- b) Information on applications and awards by Faculty, 2013/14 – 2015/16;
- c) A proposed timeline for the next Call for Applications.
(RC.15-16/62 - *Confidential*).

It **noted** that information on applications and awards by Faculty had been circulated to Faculty Research Groups for information and discussion: it was hoped that the information would counter the perception that Science departments were disproportionately favoured, and help to encourage more applications to the Fund from the Arts & Humanities and the Social Sciences.

15-16/84 Post-REF Review - CONFIDENTIAL

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

15-16/85 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 12 January 2016

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 12 January 2016 (RC.15-16/63).

15-16/86 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 15 January 2016

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 15 January 2016 (RC.15-16/64).

15-16/88 Next meeting

The Committee **noted** details of the next meeting: Wednesday 20th April 2016 at 2.15pm in HG17, Heslington Hall.

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March 2016