

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2016

Present: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)
Dean, York Graduate Research School (M15-16/93 onwards)
Dean, Faculty of Sciences (M15-16/89 – 98 only)
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Sciences
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences (except M15-16/103)
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Professor Nik Brown
Professor John Clark
Professor Jason Edwards
Dr Jonathan Finch (M15-16/89 – 100 only)
Professor Timo Gans
Dr Mary Leng (M15-16/89 – 97 only)
Professor William McGuire (M15-16/89 – 100 only)
Professor Martin Smith
Professor Jo Swaffield
Director of Research & Enterprise
Research Strategy and Policy Manager

In attendance: Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Teaching, Learning and Students (M15-16/96 only)
Mr Simon Davis (M15-16/96 only)
Dr Rachel Curwen (M15-16/98 only)
Dr Helen Jones (M15-16/99 only)
Dr Karen Clegg (M15-16/100 only)
Ms Liz Waller (M15-16/101 only)
Mr Phil Wiles (M15-16/104 only)
Ms Kirsty Dillingham (M15-16/105 & 106 only)
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from the Deputy Director of Research & Enterprise.

15-16/89 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.

15-16/90 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2016

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2016 (RC.15-16/65).

15-16/91 Gender issues arising from REF2014 - CONFIDENTIAL

15-16/92 Research Committee action log

The Committee **considered** an update on its action log (RC.15-16/67), and **noted** the following:

- (a) M14-15/111 Formalisation of cross faculty initiatives for peer review: it had been agreed with the Faculty Deans and the Associate Deans (Research) that robust systems were now in place and the action was therefore completed;
- (b) M15-16/26 Review of support for impact at department and faculty level: this action had been completed;
- (c) **Paragraph redacted - CONFIDENTIAL**
- (d) M15-16/84 Development of cross-institutional guidance on enabling change within a departmental research culture: this would be addressed once all post-REF Review visits had taken place.

15-16/93 Report from the Chair

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

- (a) The BIS grant letter to HEFCE for 2016/17 indicated the probable timing of the next REF, stating that it would need to be completed by 2021. This implied that submissions would need to be made in 2020.
- (b) **Paragraph redacted - CONFIDENTIAL**
- (c) The RSPO was setting up a PURE user group, to inform development of the

system as it became embedded within the University. Academic input was important, and Committee members were invited to join or to suggest possible contributors. Professor Clark agreed to join the group.

- (d) The Universities and Science Minister had recently announced that the non-advocacy clause for institutions in receipt of public funding would not apply to the Research Councils, HEFCE or the National Academies. Further clarification was awaited regarding other funding bodies, such as Innovate UK, which had not been named specifically.
- (e) Further information on the UK Global Challenges Research Fund was expected imminently. An internal process to identify opportunities for funding via this route and to support preparation of applications was under development, involving members of Research and Enterprise and the Associate Deans (Research).
- (f) The Wellcome Trust had offered £2.5 million over 5 years to the University for the second tranche of Institutional Strategic Support Funding (ISSF), dependent on the availability of internal matched support. Funding would start on 1 October 2016. The University's previous award had been used to support the virtual Centre for Chronic Diseases and Disorders (C2D2); discussions on the focus of a new programme were in progress, involving the Research Champions, Associate Deans and members of the current C2D2 steering group. An outline proposal would need to be submitted to UEB as soon as possible as part of the case for match funding, taking into account a full briefing meeting on 11 May at the Trust.
- (g) **Paragraph redacted - FOI EXEMPT**
- (h) Applications were encouraged to the WUN Research Mobility Programme 2016, linked to the University's Research Themes, to support visits to WUN partner institutions.
- (i) **Paragraph redacted - FOI EXEMPT**

The Committee **agreed** a proposal from the Chair and Secretary that for subsequent meetings, papers should be circulated electronically for both Category I and Category II business, instead of providing hard copies. An archive of URC papers would continue to be available via the shared web area for Committee members.

ACTION: AW

15-16/94 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)

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

Sciences: Initial discussions were under way with Chairs of DRC regarding the EPSRC CDT Call.

Arts & Humanities: Strategic support for research grant planning was being piloted with the Department of Archaeology.

The Committee further **noted** that the review of research entities was under way, and the working group was next due to meet at the end of May. A consultation was planned over the summer.

15-16/95 Report from the Director of Research & Enterprise - FOI EXEMPT

15-16/96 Workload Model Pilot

The Committee **considered** a discussion document from the Workload Model Pilot Steering Group (RC.15-16/68). The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning and Students) and Mr Davis attended the meeting to speak to this item.

The Committee **noted** the following:

- The Steering Group was undertaking a one-year pilot to look at the potential for a University-wide workload model. The pilot was driven by the principle of 'rapid prototyping' i.e. provisional decisions were made as questions arose, which could then be revisited once the model had been applied to the data from the three pilot departments and the implications were visible. Differences in existing practices across departments would be revealed by establishing regularity in accounting for particular activities.
- The current model handled the research allocation as follows: externally-funded research time was top-sliced, following which an ART staff member would be allocated a proportion of their remaining time for internally-funded research activity. The default proportion was currently set at 35%, with local discretion to set at between 20 and 60%. Research terms were counted as part of the general research allocation. There would need to be a multi-year averaging

mechanism to account for staff carrying a heavy load in other areas in particular years.

- QR allocations to departments were not currently being used to inform the model.

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

- (a) Concern was expressed that the 35% research allocation figure was likely to be read as a norm rather than a default: this could carry a risk for York as a research-intensive institution, particularly in relation to the Arts & Humanities.
- (b) Concern was also expressed at the apparent lack of flexibility within the model, which could lead to the erosion of research time. In particular, there did not appear to be any capacity to adapt to information on, for example, large grants or PGR numbers, which was often only available relatively late in the previous academic year. In response, the PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students pointed out that the paper did in fact suggest a mechanism for updating allocations late in the academic year, and welcomed any feedback on this particular proposal.
- (c) The University would need to consider the impact of the number of existing taught programmes and the introduction of further taught programmes on the time available for research.
- (d) Owing to the multi-year averaging mechanism, the current model did not recognise departments where research terms were allocated strategically and competitively, rather than as entitlement.
- (e) Support was expressed by some for top-slicing externally-funded research time in order to account for time in line with funder requirements. However, it was **noted** that this model was not supportive of colleagues who were in the process of working towards producing world-leading research, who would potentially have to take on a greater proportion of responsibilities in other areas such as teaching and assessment.
- (f) The level of detail specified allowed the size of a student cohort to be taken into account. However, concern was expressed that a fine level of detail would give rise to quibbling, and would also undermine the HoD's discretion and the professionalism of staff. Support was expressed for the mechanism of ultimate appeal to the Dean of Faculty.
- (g) Support was expressed for identifying research student supervision as a specific category. It was **noted** that PGR examining would also need to be accounted for.

- (h) It was **noted** that many departments not included in the pilot had mechanisms to account for teaching, which could be useful to build up a broader picture of the remaining time currently available for research.

The Committee **noted** that a report on the pilot, identifying key decision points, would be available in June, for consideration by URC, UTC, Faculty Executive Groups and union representatives.

15-16/97 University Research Strategy: KPIs

The Committee **approved** proposals for the development and clarification of the KPIs for the University Research Strategy (RC.15-16/69); it **noted** that the revised KPIs would be presented to the Committee for consideration at its next meeting in June.

15-16/98 KPIs for Research Theme Champions

The Committee **considered** a paper on KPIs for Research Theme Champions (RC.15-16/70). Dr Curwen attended the meeting to speak to this item. The Committee **noted** that the paper set out the types of activity that the Research Champions might be expected to undertake in order to fulfil their responsibilities, and described some outcomes for Champion activities that could indicate success. Much of the activity described was developmental, and currently the measures of success were largely qualitative. It further **noted** that the paper was not intended to be prescriptive, and that the proposed framework was likely to change over time. The proposed timeframe for review – after two years in role - took into account that this was new activity.

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

- (a) It was clarified that URC would monitor activity in relation to each Theme, whereas individual performance management would be overseen by the PVCRC and the relevant Head of Department. It was **noted** that further consideration would need to be given to the Champions' engagement with URC.
- (b) There was a need to clarify what the Committee's approach would be to underperformance in a particular area: it was important to make a distinction between individual performance and the overall viability of a Theme. The challenges of linking contribution to outcome were also acknowledged.

- (c) The Committee **noted** that the proposals were not currently linked to what was expected of professorial appointments, and were not seen to be ambitious in terms of the level of work expected of a Chair. It was **agreed** that targets could be reviewed as part of the first report to URC on Champion activities, proposed for consideration in September 2016. Members were invited to submit additional comments to Dr Curwen on what they would expect to see at this level.
- (d) The responsibility 'to provide a contact point as the external face of the theme at the University of York' was considered to be at the right level, but difficult to assess. It was noted that focusing on specific activities would be acceptable for the first year, but quantitative measures would be needed in due course.
- (e) The Committee **agreed** that the framework could be more explicit regarding the need for Champions to visit all departments in their purview during the first phase of the project. It was important not to revert to known networks, and to make contact with a wider range of colleagues in the first instance.
- (f) The framework purposely did not prescribe the scale of any activity, since smaller scale catalysing activities were often as important as larger scale actions.

The Committee **noted** that the paper would be discussed with the Champions, and a final version brought to the next meeting in June for approval. A link to the detailed records of Champion activities in Google Drive would be circulated to Committee members for information.

ACTION: RC

15-16/99 Impact Framework

The Committee **considered** a paper including a final draft of the University's Impact Framework (RC.15-16/71). Dr Jones attended the meeting for this item.

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

- (a) Research Impact Statement should include Environmental Impact in line with the HEFCE definition.
- (b) The flowchart within the Framework would benefit from review in terms of the direction of flow.
- (c) The University's statements on Impact could adopt a more adventurous tone, expanding on the innovative and counter-intuitive nature of some Impact activity.

- (d) Greater incentives were needed for staff to engage with Impact, e.g. it was currently only a discretionary element within the pilot workload model; inclusion of Impact within Promotions criteria could be strengthened.
- (e) The University's approach to consultancy would benefit from further review.

The Committee **noted** that the Framework set out established categorisation for Impact, in order to provide a common baseline for departments. However, the Committee **agreed** that it was rather unwieldy for use by academics, and could provide greater direction: it would be useful to discuss with departments what they would find helpful. This might take the form of a formal Strategy at University level. The Committee further **agreed** that it would be helpful for departments to revisit their own Impact strategies.

The Committee **agreed** that the University should consider allocating some dedicated funding (e.g. through redeployment of HEIF funds) for supporting the development of Impact.

The Committee **decided** that URC members should feed in further comments as needed, and a final draft of the Statement and Framework, incorporating all revisions, should be submitted to the next meeting in June for final approval. Following this, the documents should be circulated to departments with a top level synthesis, for discussion by FRGs as to their practical utility.

The Committee further **noted** that Impact leads were in place within all departments in the Arts & Humanities and in the Sciences; establishment of leads within Social Science departments was in train and would be picked up via ADRRs. Compilation of a University-level overview of case studies would be initiated in the autumn.

15-16/100 Review of Research Training and Support and Learning Needs Analysis

The Committee **considered** a final report on the Review of Research Training and Support, including a Learning Needs Analysis (RC.15-16/72). Dr Clegg attended the meeting for this item, which was introduced by the Dean of YGRS as Chair of the Review group.

The Committee **noted** the report's recommendations, including the recommendation that URC and the YGRS Board should establish a Research Excellence Training Group, responsible for both staff and students, and reporting

into both committees. Further proposals for the membership and terms of reference of this Group would come to URC for approval in due course.

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

- (a) The role of the Associate Deans and Faculties in relation to implementation and delivery would be subject to further consultation. Input would be invited via FRGs in relation to the Research Excellence and Funding theme in particular.
- (b) In response to external drivers (e.g. ESRC DTP) and good practice elsewhere, YGRS would be developing an approach to recording and monitoring Training Needs Analysis for PGR students.
- (c) The decision to move the Researcher Development Team from HR to Research & Enterprise in order to lead on operational delivery would be announced shortly. Proposals for the YLT Award to move to the Academic Support Office to sit with PGCAP were under discussion.

The Committee **endorsed** the report and its recommendations, and **noted** that broader consultation would follow in relation to implementation. It **agreed** that Chairs of DRC should be asked to comment on the report and distribute it further as appropriate within their departments e.g. to officers for higher degrees.

15-16/101 Research Data Management

The Committee **received** for information an update on Research Data Management (RDM) implementation (RC.15-16/73). Ms Waller attended the meeting to speak to this item. The Committee **noted** the opportunities for infrastructure solutions available through the Jisc RDM Shared Services Programme. It **approved** the proposal for six-monthly reports to URC on progress towards implementation of a full support model for RDM.

The Committee further **received** an oral report from Ms Waller regarding developments in relation to Open Access, as follows:

- (a) Queries from the University relating to the UK Scholarly Communications Licence had been referred to the relevant national organising committee. A new draft of the Licence (now termed a Policy) had been released, and would be considered by the PVC(R) and the Associate Deans (Research) in the first instance. A background document to the Policy had been prepared by the Director of Library Services at Imperial, and would be circulated to the Committee for information. Further legal consultation was in progress,

including in relation to governance arrangements, and a discussion paper would be brought to the Committee in due course.

- (b) Negotiations with Elsevier were currently under way via a national Board led by Jisc and including strong academic and library services representation from the Russell Group. Negotiating criteria had been set by Jisc through consultation with the HE community. Negotiations were expected to be prolonged. It was **noted** that if necessary, a paper on the implications of the situation for the University, including access to journals, would be submitted to the Committee for consideration. The Committee supported a robust approach to these negotiations and further **noted** that Faculty Research Groups would be notified of these developments.

15-16/102 Annual Departmental Research Reviews 2016

The Committee **considered** proposals for the ADRR process for 2016 (RC.15-16/74). It **noted** that for the purposes of ADRR, the data set, including number of grant applications and awards, number and type of scholarly outputs and PGR registrations and completion rates, would be anonymised. However, a full data set would be available to Chairs of DRC and HoDs on an ongoing basis. Following discussion, the proposals were **approved**, subject to:

- (a) Adjustment of the process for feeding back to departments, so that a formal meeting with the HoD/CDRC is held only where there are specific issues to be discussed;
- (b) Refinement of the draft question relating to PGRs, in order to focus on departmental research strategy (as distinct from the questions relating to PGRs asked as part of the University's APR and MTP processes).

ACTION: TS

The Committee **noted** that information on the proposed data and question sets would be presented at the forthcoming meeting of Research Forum.

15-16/103 Post-REF Review - CONFIDENTIAL

15-16/104 Application Deadlines Project

The Committee **received** an update on the Application Deadlines Project pilot (RC.15-16/76). Mr Wiles attended the meeting to speak to this item.

The Committee **noted** that, following a review of progress, it had been decided to extend the pilot to a further five departments and delay full implementation until 1 June. Recent feedback from departmental research administrators, following further work on the electronic Intent to Submit form, had been largely positive.

15-16/105 In-year income to end January 2016 - FOI EXEMPT

15-16/106 Applications and awards to end January 2016 - FOI EXEMPT

15-16/107 Operational model for Research Priming Fund Committee

The Committee **approved** proposals for a revised operational model for the Research Priming Fund Committee (RC.15-16/79). It **noted** that the new model would have implications for the new members of the Committee for 2016/17. The nomination and election processes for the latter were currently being conducted by Senate.

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

15-16/108 Stern Review of REF: Call for Evidence

The Committee **received** for information a copy of the University's response to the Stern Review of REF: Call for Evidence (RC.15-16/80).

15-16/109 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts and Humanities held on 24 February 2016

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts and Humanities held on 24 February 2016 (RC.15-16/81).

15-16/110 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 21 March 2016

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 21 March 2016 (RC.15-16/82).

15-16/111 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 15 March 2016

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 15 March 2016 (RC.15-16/83).

15-16/112 Minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 18 February 2016

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 18 February 2016 (RC.15-16/84).

15-16/113 Next meeting

The Committee **noted** details of the next meeting: Wednesday 15 June 2016 at 9.15am in HG17, Heslington Hall.

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May 2016