

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2016

- Present:** Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)  
Dean, York Graduate Research School  
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities (M15-16/114 – 131 only)  
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences (except M15-16/132)  
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
Professor Nik Brown  
Professor John Clark (M15-16/114 – 132 only)  
Professor Jason Edwards  
Dr Jonathan Finch  
Professor Timo Gans  
Dr Mary Leng (M15-16/114 – 131 only)  
Professor William McGuire  
Professor Martin Smith (M15-16/114 – 134 only)  
Professor Jo Swaffield  
Director of Research & Enterprise  
Deputy Director of Research & Enterprise  
Research Strategy and Policy Manager
- In attendance:** Mr David Barrett (M15-16/121 only)  
Mr David Hudson (M15-16/121 only)  
Dr Helen Jones (M15-16/125 only)  
Professor Sue Hartley (M15-16/128 only)  
Ms Kirsty Dillingham (M15-16/135 only)  
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Professors Festenstein and Fulton.

#### 15-16/114 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.

#### 15-16/115 Roles and responsibilities of URC members / Procedures for declaration of members' interests

The Committee **approved** final versions of the Statement of Roles and Responsibilities of URC Members and the Procedure for Declaration of URC Members' Interests (RC.15-16/85). It **noted** that these documents would be made available online via the Committee's webpages.

The Committee further **noted** that the call for nominations for vacancies on URC from 2016/17 would close on Friday 17 June. To date, 4 nominations had been received in the Social Sciences, 3 in the Arts & Humanities, and 2 in the Sciences, with further nominations expected. The Committee **agreed** that nominees needed to be aware of the workload and commitment involved for URC members. It further **agreed** that all nominees should receive the above documents for information, and should be encouraged to speak to a current member of URC in order to gauge the type of work involved.

**ACTION: Chair & AW**

#### 15-16/116 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2016

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2016 (RC.15-16/86).

#### 15-16/117 Research Committee action log

The Committee **considered** an update on its action log (RC.15-16/87), and **noted** the following:

- (a) **Paragraph redacted - CONFIDENTIAL**
- (b) MM15-16/27, 40 & 102: Actions relating to the ADRR process had been completed and the data and question set circulated to departments at the beginning of June;
- (c) M14-15/66(c): the Faculty Deans and Associate Deans (Research) **reported** that Faculty structures were now clear, including effective lines of communication, and that this action had therefore been completed;

- (d) M14-15/111: the electronic grant submission form had been launched successfully; wider sharing of successful applications would be addressed in autumn;
- (e) MM15-16/26 & 61: a paper on the workload allocation model was due to be considered by UEB imminently, and a formal report, dependent on UEB's discussion, would follow in due course.

The Committee noted that the circulation of papers for the current meeting in electronic form had operated satisfactorily.

**15-16/118 Report from the Chair - CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT**

**15-16/119 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)**

The Committee **received** reports on recent developments from the Associate Deans (Research). Within the Arts & Humanities, it **noted** that the FRG and the Impact subgroup were operating well and preparing to support the ADRR process over the summer. The role description for departmental academic Impact leads drawn up by the RSPO Impact Officer had been circulated to departments. The Committee further **noted** that business from the Science and Social Science FRGs was reported in the Groups' respective minutes (agenda items 24 and 25: enclosures 106 and 107).

**15-16/120 Report from the Director of Research & Enterprise - FOI EXEMPT**

**15-16/121 Update on Project SYGMA**

The Committee **received** an update on Project SYGMA. Mr David Hudson and Mr David Barrett attended the meeting to present this item.

The Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) The drivers and benefits of the Project, which was to procure and implement a research grants management and administration system – Worktribe - to replace pFACT, and embed the new system in the pre-award grant application process, revising business process as required;
- (b) The approach to implementation, which included a group of around 30 system testers drawn from across the University, including the YRAF community;
- (c) The key dates for the Project, as follows:
  - Pre-award go live from: 31 Dec 2016
  - Pre-award rollout period: 1 Jan 2017 + 7 months

- Post-award (budgets) from: 1 Aug 2017
  - Post-award (actuals and commitments): 1 Aug 2017;
- (d) Anticipated improvements, including:
- Visibility of funding opportunities from Research Professional within Worktribe. A meeting was scheduled with Research Professional the following week to work on a more integrated approach;
  - A sufficient degree of granularity to measure applications and awards at Cost Centre level;
  - Development of a solution for showing committed salary costs.

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

- (i) Increasing uptake of Worktribe across the sector;
- (ii) Worktribe had scored well in terms of user interface at procurement stage, and feedback from test users within the University had been positive so far. The project plan included training for users as part of the rollout;
- (iii) More broadly, discussion was in train at national level regarding improved interoperability between systems used within the sector, including between RCUK's new grant submission system to replace JeS and universities' grant management systems such as Worktribe. On the latter, HEIs had stressed to RCUK the need to involve university research offices as well as individual academics in any consultation on this front, and Committee members were asked to inform the Director of Research & Enterprise of any news of proposed changes circulating via academic routes.

The Committee commended the progress made with Project SYGMA, which would make a significant difference to research grant management and administration at the University. The Chair thanked Mr Hudson and Mr Barrett for their presentation.

#### **15-16/122 HE White Paper: *Success as a knowledge economy***

The Committee **considered** the HE White Paper, *Success as a knowledge economy* (RC.15-16/89). It **noted** that the main focus of the White Paper and of government was teaching and the TEF, and that the UEB had decided that the University would participate in the TEF, given that the York Pedagogy project put the University in a relatively strong position. The focus of the Committee's discussion was the Executive Summary and section 3 of the Paper, which looked at regulatory architecture, including for research.

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

- (a) Under the proposals, the Research Councils would be combined with HEFCE's research-related remit under the banner of UKRI. Further clarification was needed regarding how this would work in practice, particularly given that the Higher Education Funding Councils in Scotland and Wales were currently expected to retain their remits covering both teaching and research.
- (b) The Secretary of State would have the capacity to transfer funding between individual Research Councils, which could potentially favour the sciences. However, the principle of hypothecated funding streams was being retained, as was the Haldane principle regarding dual funding of research. Nevertheless, the Committee **noted** that the operation of dual funding by a single institution presented a potential risk of shifts between budgets if funding were to be further reduced.
- (c) Responsibility for REF would be transferred to the Research Councils, who did not have prior operational experience in this area. The report on the Stern Review was due in July, following which consultation on the next REF was expected. It was anticipated that the next REF would include the use of metrics in combination with peer review. The government had indicated that the next REF was to be completed by 2021, which implied a submission date in 2020.
- (d) It was **reported** that the Stern Review was now looking at the research-led teaching agenda in addition to its original remit, although there had been no consultation on this within the sector.
- (e) HEFCE had been asked to clarify where responsibility for PGR students would sit in relation to UKRI and the Office for Students.
- (f) Given current numbers of self-funded PGR students, the proposed PGR loan scheme was at risk of over-subscription, which could result in a funding squeeze on RCUK student scholarships.

The Committee further **noted** that the proposals in the White Paper were still to be passed by Parliament, and should be regarded as work in progress.

#### **15-16/123 Research Strategy Implementation Plan: KPIs - FOI EXEMPT**

#### **15-16/124 Performance Indicators for Research Champions**

The Committee **considered** revised proposals for Performance Indicators for Research Champions (RC.15-16/91). It **noted** that the paper included data on where the Champions had engaged with departmental staff as of May 2016, and that further detail was available to URC members via the records of Champion

activities in Google Drive. It further **noted** that Council had supported the proposal that there should be two monitoring points for Research Champion performance, using Performance Review and appraisal of qualitative data at the end of year 1 (September 2016) and Performance Review with quantitative targets and full theme review at the end of year 2 (September 2017).

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

- (a) Although it was not necessarily appropriate to align the KPIs directly with professorial expectations, more ambitious language could be used to emphasise leadership within the former;
- (b) The Champions should include PGR research in their reviews of research activity;
- (c) The Champions should be encouraged to continue to engage with the Faculties, and in particular the Arts & Humanities.

The Committee **agreed** that the proposals should be modified in the light of its comments, and then circulated electronically to the Committee for any final comments prior to approval via Chair's action.

**ACTION: RC in conjunction with Chair**

#### **15-16/125 Impact Statement and Strategic Framework - FOI EXEMPT**

#### **15-16/126 Annual Statement to Council on Research Integrity**

The Committee **approved** the Annual Statement to Council on Research Integrity for 2015/16 (RC.15-16/94).

#### **15-16/127 Update on the review of research entities**

The Committee **received** for information an update on the review of research entities (RC.15-16/95). The Chair thanked the Associate Deans in particular for their input to the Working Group on research entities so far.

The Committee **noted** that the draft typology of groupings would enable URC to identify which research entities were of sufficient scale to warrant regular formal reporting at University level. The draft typology had been circulated to Heads of Department for comment at this stage; Directors of research groupings would be asked to comment on the Working Group's formal recommendations later on in the process. The Committee **agreed** that Heads of Department should be asked via

Faculty Executives to brief Directors of research groupings on this proposed process.

**ACTION: Faculty Deans**

The Committee **noted** that a full report from the Working Group, including the formal recommendations and an implementation plan, would come to the Committee in the autumn.

**15-16/128 YESI: EAB Recommendations and Implementation - FOI EXEMPT**

**15-16/129 Annual report on Research & Enterprise resources - FOI EXEMPT**

**15-16/130 Post-REF Review - CONFIDENTIAL**

**15-16/131 Post-REF Review - CONFIDENTIAL**

**15-16/132 Post-REF Review - CONFIDENTIAL**

**15-16/133 Comparative review of HESA 2014/15 data relating to research grant income - FOI EXEMPT**

**15-16/134 MTP research grant income forecasts - FOI EXEMPT**

**15-16/135 Applications and awards to end March 2016 - FOI EXEMPT**

## **CATEGORY II BUSINESS**

**15-16/136 Open Access requirements for REF: quarterly report on rates of deposit in PURE**

The Committee **received** for information a quarterly report on rates of deposit in PURE relating to HEFCE Open Access requirements for REF (RC.15-16/104).

**15-16/137 Minutes of the meeting of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee held on 10 December 2015**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee held on 10 December 2015 (RC.15-16/105).

**15-16/138 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 9 May 2016**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 9 May 2016 (RC.15-16/106).

**15-16/139 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 10 May 2016**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 10 May 2016 (RC.15-16/107).

**15-16/140 Minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 23 May 2016**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 23 May 2016 (RC.15-16/108).

**15-16/141 Details of meetings for 2016/17**

The Committee **noted** details of URC meetings for 2016/17 as follows:

- Tuesday 27 September 2016 at 2.15pm in HG17, Heslington Hall
- Thursday 17 November 2016 at 2.15pm in HG09, Heslington Hall
- Wednesday 1 February 2017 at 9.15am in HG17, Heslington Hall
- Wednesday 15 March 2017 at 9.15am in HG17, Heslington Hall
- Wednesday 26 April 2017 at 2.15pm in HG17, Heslington Hall
- Wednesday 21 June 2017 at 9.15am in HG17, Heslington Hall.

aw/aw  
June 2016