

**UNIVERSITY OF YORK**

**Senate**

**RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016**

- Present:** Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)  
Dean, York Graduate Research School  
Dean, Faculty of Arts & Humanities  
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences  
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Sciences  
Professor Nik Brown  
Professor Jason Edwards  
Professor Mathew Evans  
Dr Kate Giles (alternate for Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts & Humanities) (M16-17/28-51 only)  
Professor Maria Goddard  
Dr Mary Leng  
Professor William McGuire  
Professor Jenny Steele  
Professor Elizabeth Tyler  
Professor Piran White  
Director of Research & Enterprise  
Deputy Director of Research & Enterprise  
Research Strategy and Policy Manager
- In attendance:** Dr Jessica Hendon (M16-17/45 & 46 only)  
Mr Stuart Gladwell (M16-17/48 only)  
Ms Janette Colclough (M16-17/49 & 50 only)  
Dr Karen Clegg (M16-17/51 only)  
Ms Kirsty Dillingham (M16-17/53-55 only)  
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Professors Bell, Buchanan and Fulton.

**16-17/28 Membership**

The Committee welcomed Professor Evans as a new academic member for the Sciences in place of Professor Clark, who would be taking up a post at the University of Sheffield in March and had therefore resigned from the Committee. It **noted** that Professor Evans' appointment was based on the outcome of the membership ballot held by Senate over the summer.

### 16-17/29 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 members in question would leave the meeting for that item, as recorded below.

### 16-17/30 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2016

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2016 (RC.16-17/22).

### 16-17/31 Research Committee action log

The Committee **noted** a progress report against its action log for 2016/17 (RC. 16-17/23).

### 16-17/32 Report from the Chair

The Committee **received** an oral report on recent developments from the Chair, as follows:

- (a) The HEFCE REF2021 consultation had not yet been published but was expected imminently, at which point the Committee would be contacted. Assuming the consultation period would be around 14 weeks, a draft response would be brought to the Committee's next meeting on 1 February 2017.
- (b) The Higher Education and Research Bill, published 15 November, clarified that UKRI would have oversight of PGR students ie these students would be classified under research rather than teaching activity. The Committee **decided** that this information should be communicated to departments via the RSPO, and the message reinforced by Faculties.  
**ACTION: RSPO & Associate Deans**  
The Committee further **noted** that the overall remits of UKRI and the Office for Students were still to be clarified, and no more information had been released in relation to Research England.
- (c) A panel to appoint a new PVC for Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange would meet at the end of January 2017. The new post would need to build links with research activity and with URC.
- (d) An implementation plan for the workload allocation model had been considered by Planning Committee. Consultation with the unions had been completed, and the Director of Corporate Planning and Deputy Registrar had written to HoDs, requesting a response on departments' ability to comply with the proposed principles within their workload schemes by 2017/18.

Arising from M16-17/06, the Committee **noted** that the text of the principles had not been altered post Planning Committee. In relation to PGRs, it was currently implied that departments could decide whether to count PGRs under research or under teaching. The Committee **decided** that the Chair should contact the Director of Corporate Planning and Deputy Registrar and the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor, noting the recent clarification that UKRI would have oversight of PGR students, and also asking that Impact should be acknowledged under the section relating to research.

**ACTION: Chair**

- (e) The SPM process was under way, and would inform the MTP exercise in the new year. Information from 2016 ADRRs was being fed in, and the thoroughness of the ADRR process had been recognised as valuable.
- (f) The University's second annual Impact Conference would take place on Tuesday 6 December, featuring Professor James Wilsdon as a keynote speaker. Around 160 colleagues had registered, with around 15 places remaining. At least half of delegates booked were academic staff and of the rest, around half were administrative staff and half PhD students. Every department was represented in some way, although in some areas there were more PhD students than staff.

**Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION .**

The Committee **agreed** that each department should have academic staff representation: this was a key opportunity to network and take the Impact agenda forward.

- (g) HEFCE had recently announced that the initial flexibility in its Open Access policy had been extended for a further year, and the requirement for outputs to be deposited on acceptance would commence after 1 April 2018, subject to a review of readiness of systems in the sector in autumn 2017. The Library had been notified of this development and would communicate it to staff. The Committee **noted** the importance of continuing to deposit outputs on acceptance wherever possible.
- (h) **Paragraph redacted – CONFIDENTIAL**
- (i) The University's Wellcome ISSF application for a cross-faculty virtual Centre for Future Health had been funded in full: £2.5 million over 5 years, matched by the University. 40% of the funding was frontloaded in support of 10 – 12 two year postdoc fellowships. The Centre was due to launch on 1 January, with a similar structure to C2D2. The Centre Director would be Professor Alex Wade, Psychology.

- (j) The paper on common issues arising from Post REF Reviews had been considered by UEB, and would be sent to HoDs and Chairs of DRC on a confidential basis in the coming week.

### **16-17/33 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)**

The Committee **received** oral reports on recent developments from the Associate Deans (Research), noting the following:

*Impact:*

- (a) The ESRC IAA would continue for one further year, although the amount allocated was not yet known. An AHRC-aligned IAA Call had been launched, and there would be an EPSRC call for renewals to IAAs.
- (b) Shortlisting for a Social Sciences Faculty Impact Manager was in train; and agreement had been reached within the Sciences to advertise for an Impact support role in the next few weeks.
- (c) An Impact REF case study scoping exercise had been launched by the Impact Officer.
- (d) A meeting of departmental Impact leads in the Social Sciences had been arranged.
- (e) The HRC proposition session on Impact had been well attended.

*ADRR 2016:* follow-up with departments was complete, apart from one department in each of the Sciences and Social Sciences. The Chair thanked the Associate Deans and all those who had contributed to the ADRR process for 2016, which had worked well.

The Committee further **noted** that the EPSRC Physical Sciences visit had been very successful.

### **16-17/34 Report from the Director of Research and Enterprise**

The Committee **received** for information an oral report on recent developments from the Director of Research & Enterprise, noting the following:

- (a) The University had submitted an institutional Knowledge Exchange Strategy to HEFCE to inform a further 5 year HEIF allocation from 2017/18 (RC.16-17/43 refers).
- (b) *Research Grants and Contracts and IP and Legal*
  - i. **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**
  - ii. RGC had been reorganised into four funder teams, from three, to improve portfolio balance and management.

- iii. Project SYGMA was due to launch at the start of the next academic year, and should provide more efficient and streamlined processes.

The Committee **noted** that the above developments would be communicated to departments.

(c) *New funding for businesses to work with academics:*

- i. The University had been awarded ERDF funding to run a capital grants scheme for small businesses, funding up to 40% of equipment costs. Whilst not funding work in the University itself, the project, run by the Economic Development Team, would bring companies into contact with the University.
- ii. In addition, two Innovation Voucher Schemes, run by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the University of Hull, were expected to launch in the next few months. These would allow companies to apply for funds to buy innovation work from universities and would complement the capital grants scheme.

The Committee **noted** that these opportunities would be disseminated by the BDM team, who would actively seek to bring companies and academics together in viable funded projects.

#### **16-17/35 YGRS response to information on PGRs from 2016 ADRR reports**

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Dean of the York Graduate Research School regarding the School's response to information on PGRs from the 2016 ADRR reports. It **noted** that the Dean had reviewed the information upon receipt in August and had taken immediate action where required. The information had then been considered by the YGRS Board in September, where issues for comment and good practice to share had been identified.

#### **Paragraph redacted - CONFIDENTIAL**

The Committee further **noted** that neither the ADRR question nor the ADRR process with respect to PGRs had proved fit for purpose. In particular, the question appeared to have prompted departments to repeat information provided via the UTC Annual Programme Review process, rather than to reflect on strategic issues. It was **agreed** that for this year, strategic issues would be referred to FRGs for discussion, and that the Dean of YGRS would attend these meetings. Thereafter, a decision would be made regarding whether to include a revised question relating to PGRs in the ADRR 2017 question set, or to pursue these issues via a separate process from 2017 onwards.

**ACTION: Associate Deans to invite YGRS Dean to FRG meetings**

## 16-17/36 Annual Report from the York Graduate Research School

The Committee **considered** an Annual Report for the York Graduate Research School (YGRS) for the academic year 2015-16 (RC.16-17/23a). It **noted** that the Chair had requested an Annual Report from YGRS to URC, and that these reports would also be considered by the University Executive Board.

In the course of discussion, the following comments were **noted**:

- (a) It would be helpful to include an explicit statement on Impact training for PGRs;
- (b) There was a need to revisit the wording of Academic Objective 1 in order to clarify the School's role in recruiting high quality students;
- (c) In order to address the issue of procedural errors, it might be more appropriate to consider role training rather than an appointment to provide cover for departmental graduate administrators, given competing priorities for resourcing;
- (d) For the purposes of UEB, the recommendations would need to be listed on the cover sheet and information relating to resources would need to be developed further.

The Committee **approved** the School's Key Objectives for 2016-18, subject to the above comments being addressed.

The Committee further **noted** that the YGRS Dean's hands-on approach had been greatly appreciated by HoDs and Chairs of DRC, and thanked Professor Stoneham for his work in the role, which had transformed the PGR landscape at York.

## 16-17/37 Initial draft timetable for REF2021 oversight and submission

The Committee **considered** an initial draft timetable for REF2021 oversight and submission (RC.16-17/24). It **noted** the following:

- i. The proposed details of REF2021 were still awaited, so the implications for departments were not yet known. The exercise was likely to be in a similar format to REF2014, with the exception of the need for University level Environment Template submission and Impact Case Studies, and severance of a direct link between staff and their outputs.
- ii. For REF2014, much URC business had been suspended for over 12 months owing to the volume of work. For REF2021, therefore, it was proposed that URC should retain overall responsibility for the process, but that much of the work should be undertaken by working groups reporting to URC. It was intended that this should improve promptness and flexibility in providing feedback to departments.

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

**Paragraphs redacted- CONFIDENTIAL .**

The Committee **noted** that the proposals would be revised in the light of its comments, and taken to UEB for consideration in December. It was **agreed** that consultation with FRGs should take place in January, and that a Strategy Working Group should not be appointed until this had taken place. A further iteration of the proposals would be brought to the Committee's next meeting on 1 February 2017.

**16-17/38 Post-REF Review - (CONFIDENTIAL)**

**16-17/39 Post-REF Review - (CONFIDENTIAL)**

**16-17/40 Post-REF Review - (CONFIDENTIAL)**

**16-17/41 Draft report from the working group on research entities**

The Committee **considered** a draft report from the working group on research entities (RC.16-17/28). It **noted** the report's scope and the details of the consultation exercises which had informed it. Nine recommendations were proposed, including the classification of current research entities into four categories, with three possible underpinning governance and communications models according to the size and complexity of the research entity. The Committee further **noted** that the group's aim was to maximise the benefit of research entities, whilst proposing appropriate and acceptable structures for their governance.

The Committee **noted** that, following the meeting, it was proposed to carry out one further rapid consultation round with departments, following which the finalised report would be considered by UEB in December. A copy of the report would also be sent to UTC for information, highlighting the fact that teaching-only entities were excluded from the review.

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

(a) External partnerships:

- i. It was suggested that external partnerships should have in place an engagement strategy as well as a research strategy.
- ii. The branding of external partnerships was likely to be driven by the communities with which they were interacting. It was **noted** that external partnerships would have the opportunity to make the case for their preferred branding at the point at which approval for the research entity was sought from URC.
- iii. Where external partnerships involved significant financial responsibilities to be taken on by departments, these issues would be considered as part of the URC approval process.

**ACTION: MM to send proposals for rewording to CB**

- (b) The report proposed appropriate monitoring procedures to handle the emergence of new research entities. Greater control of web information would also support monitoring of this area.
- (c) There was still no definitive list of existing research entities, and it was likely that some pruning would take place in cases of obsolescence or redundancy.
- (d) Further clarity was needed within the report regarding the implications of the recommendations for the identity of current IDCs and their associated terms and conditions.
- (e) It was clarified that governance model 1 applied to small and emergent research entities primarily based in a single department, where interdisciplinarity extended only to the involvement of a small number of colleagues from outside the department. Informal shared governance arrangements were therefore appropriate and, for many existing entities of this nature, were already in place.
- (f) It was **noted** that the 'single departmental lead model' did not necessarily apply within governance model 2, in order to avoid imposing a restructure on existing IDCs which had no lead department. However, the Committee **agreed** that a broader discussion of the implications of this was needed with Planning and Finance, and **noted** that the report was due to be considered by Operations Group the following week. Comments would need to be received by the working group in time for any modifications to be made before the report was submitted to UEB.

The Committee **approved** the report's proposed recommendations, subject to the above points being addressed.

#### **16-17/42 Revised model of terms of reference for Departmental Research Committees**

The Committee **considered** revised model terms of reference for Departmental Research Committees (RC.16-17/29). Following discussion, it **agreed** that the stipulation of at least one meeting per term was appropriate given the variety of research governance structures within departments, but that this should be seen as a minimum. In due course, the relationship between DRCs and FRGs would need to be articulated: this would be considered following the conclusion of the review of research governance structures being carried out by the RSPO.

The Committee **approved** the revised model terms of reference for Departmental Research Committees.

**16-17/43 Revision to the ADRR timescale for 2017**

The Committee **approved** a proposal to bring the ADRR timescale forward by one month, so that all related discussions with departments could be completed by the URC September meeting (RC.16-17/30), prior to the commencement of institutional strategic planning meetings. It **noted** the importance of scheduling the panel meetings as soon as possible in order to secure members' availability.

**ACTION: RSPO**

**16-17/44 Support for Early Career Researchers via Fellowships at York**

The Committee **noted** that this item had been postponed in order to further establish specific options for development, and would be considered at the next meeting.

**16-17/45 Global Challenges Research Fund: update on University of York position - CONFIDENTIAL AND FOI EXEMPT**

**16-17/46 Enhancing Mental Health Research at York - CONFIDENTIAL AND FOI EXEMPT**

**16-17/47 Processes for the allocation of internal funding for research and impact**

The Committee **considered** draft guidance on processes for the allocation of internal funding for research and impact (RC.16-17/34). It **noted** that formal guidance in this area had been requested by the PVC-R in the light of the increasing number of internal research and impact priming pots available, managed by different offices within the University. The guidance had been drawn up in consultation with the PVC-R, the Research Strategy and Policy Manager and the Senior Research Development Manager (Sciences).

In relation to panel membership, the Committee **noted** the importance of balancing previous experience (especially for a Chair) with the need to train new members, and **decided** that the phrase 'with appropriate experience' should be added to the first bullet point in this section. It also **noted** that the inclusion of ECRs and post-docs might not always be appropriate e.g. if sensitive information were involved, and **agreed** that the guidance should be adjusted accordingly. The Committee also discussed the relative weight to be given to strategic priority and to research quality. It noted that this was difficult to quantify further, and would need to be elucidated through panels' discussions, followed by constructive feedback.

The Committee **approved** the guidance on processes for the allocation of internal funding for research and impact, subject to the above amendments. In addition, given recent discussions regarding the award value threshold below which formal DRC signoff would not be required, it was further **agreed** that a brief additional

section of guidance regarding DRC/HoD involvement should be added, for approval via Chair's action.

**ACTION: AW, working with Chair**

#### **16-17/48 PURE development plan**

The Committee **considered** a paper on priorities for PURE system development, as identified by the PURE User and Operations Groups (RC.16-17/35). Mr Gladwell attended the meeting for this item. The Committee **approved** proposals for PURE system development for 2016-17 and **noted** projected work for 2017-18. It further **noted** that a developmental plan for PURE would be presented to URC on an annual basis, for approval.

#### **16-17/49 Support model for Research Data Management**

The Committee **received** a progress report on implementation of a full support model for research data management (RC.16-17/36). Ms Colclough attended the meeting for this item. The Committee **noted** that at its April 2016 meeting, it had approved a proposal for six-monthly progress reports to URC in this area.

The Committee **noted** the report. It further **noted** that information on data sets recorded in PURE was currently skewed towards the Sciences, given EPSRC compliance requirements. Although the ESRC had similar requirements, it provided its own archiving facility, which was not the case for EPSRC. The Committee **agreed** the importance of encouraging use of Pure to record data sets stored in external data archives.

The Committee further **noted** that the Concordat on Open Research Data was a set of expectations of best practice, rather than a mandatory code.

#### **16-17/50 Open Access**

The Committee **received** an oral update from Ms Colclough on behalf of the Deputy Director of Information Services regarding negotiations with Elsevier in relation to Open Access. It **noted** that new licence terms had been agreed between Elsevier and Jisc Collections (negotiating on behalf of the HE community), in the form of a five year agreement giving access to journal content through ScienceDirect. Whilst the exact terms remained confidential at present and some elements had yet to be finalised, the Library community was pleased with the outcome of negotiations. The support of VCs had been crucial in achieving a positive outcome as was the support of the HE academic community in general.

#### **16-17/51 Implementation of the Research Learning Needs Analysis**

The Committee **considered** a report on resource required to implement the Research Learning Needs Analysis (RC.16-17/37). Dr Clegg attended the meeting for this item. It was **noted** that URC had no mandate for decision-making in relation to resources, but that the Committee's support in this area would help a case for more resource to be made by Research & Enterprise via the MTP process.

The Committee supported the proposed process and rationale for transferring the portfolio of work associated with supporting PGWTs from RETT to the Academic Support Office (ASO). It **noted** the need to clarify within the paper that the time claimed by the ASO for managing this training portfolio reflected the time currently being spent by RETT on this area. It further **noted** that York's sector-leading position and competitive advantage in this area had been promoted in prospectuses for the current year and on Careers webpages, using a statement based on DLHE data. It was **noted** that although PRES data also supported this claim, they could not be used for marketing purposes.

It was clarified that activity listed in Table 1 with an X against it indicated that a specialist role was needed to deliver training in this area. It was suggested that the paper could give more emphasis to the additional skills required as well as the additional FTE requested.

It was further suggested that the paper should include an additional paragraph acknowledging research-related training delivered outside RETT and its articulation with the RETT offer, as scoped out in the original Learning Needs Analysis.

#### **16-17/52 Research Communications Strategy Project**

The Committee **received** an update on the Research Communications Strategy Project (RC.16-17/38). It **noted** that the FRG for the Sciences had expressed concerns regarding the implications of the Project for specialist resource located within departments, and had emphasised the need to identify and draw on existing best practice in order to avoid unnecessary groundwork.

The Committee **noted** that a more detailed paper, identifying attendant resourcing issues, would be brought to the next meeting.

#### **16-17/53 Applications and awards to end September 2016 - FOI EXEMPT**

#### **16-17/54 Research Councils success rates benchmarking - FOI EXEMPT**

#### **16-17/55 Russell Group Data Sharing Exercise – FOI EXEMPT**

#### **16-17/56 Quarter 1 research grant forecast review – FOI EXEMPT**

## CATEGORY II BUSINESS

### **16-17/57 HEFCE Knowledge Exchange (HEIF) Strategy**

The Committee **received for information** the University's HEFCE Knowledge Exchange (HEIF) Strategy for HEIF 2016-17 onwards (RC.16-17/43).

### **16-17/58 Annual ethical conduct audits for 2015/16**

The Committee **received for information** a report on annual ethical conduct audits for 2015/16 (RC.16-17/44).

### **16-17/59 Minutes of the meetings of the Global Challenges Research Fund Steering Group**

The Committee **received for information** the minutes of the meetings of the Global Challenges Research Fund Steering Group held on 19 September and 12 October 2016 (RC.16-17/45).

### **16-17/60 Next meeting**

The Committee **noted** details of the next meeting: Wednesday 1 February 2017 at 9.15am in H/G17, Heslington Hall. It further **noted** that the date of the March 2017 meeting had been changed to Friday 10 March 2017 at 1pm in H/G17, Heslington Hall.

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November 2016