

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2017

Present: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)
Dean, York Graduate Research School
Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts & Humanities (to M16-17/70 only)
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Sciences
Acting Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts & Humanities
(MM16-17/64 – 77 only)
Professor Nik Brown (to M16-17/70 only)
Professor Mathew Evans (M16-17/64 onwards)
Professor William McGuire
Professor Jenny Steele
Professor Elizabeth Tyler
Professor Piran White
Director of Research & Enterprise
Research Strategy and Policy Manager

In attendance: Dr Rachel Curwen (M16-17/70 only)
Dr Jess Hendon (M16-17/70 only)
Mr David Barrett (M16-17/71 only)
Mr David Hudson (M16-17/71 only)
Ms Kirsty Dillingham (M16-17/72 & 73 only)
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Leng and Professors Bell, Edwards, Fulton and Goddard.

16-17/61 Declarations of conflicts of interest

Potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting were **noted**.

16-17/62 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016 (RC.16-17/46).

16-17/63 Research Committee action log

The Committee **noted** a progress report against its action log for 2016/17 (RC. 16-17/47). It further **noted** the following:

- (a) In relation to M14-15/70: Review of the role of central research services in helping staff to identify appropriate funding, the appointment of an Associate Director and Head of Research Services to Research & Enterprise, starting on 24 April 2017, would help to expedite progress in this area;
- (b) In relation to M15-16/84 and M15-16/132 regarding follow up to Post-REF Review visits, details of UEB minutes were needed;
ACTION: AG to work with DS to progress
- (c) Further to M15-16/125 regarding promotion criteria and impact, UEB had set up a sub-group to look at a number of issues relating to promotions, and would report after Easter in order to feed into the next promotions round.

16-17/64 Report from the Chair

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

- (a) **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**
- (b) Impact case study scoping reports were due in from departments on 31 January 2017; these would be reviewed by the Research Impact Officer and a report would come to the next meeting of URC in March.
- (c) The Government consultation on Building Industrial Strategy had been launched on 23 January 2017. The Committee **noted** that significant resource was associated with this initiative, and that the list of challenge areas published as part of the consultation included several areas in which the University had particular strengths, including Bioscience and Biotech. It further **noted** that although the list focused on STEM subjects, the AHRC and the ESRC had also signalled a desire to contribute towards this agenda. It was expected that much of the available resource would be allocated to industrial partnerships.

The Committee **noted** the importance of keeping abreast of these developments and of positioning the University strongly and rapidly in response. The RDM team was keeping track of the consultation process; the need to co-ordinate responses via electronic routes was further **noted**. The consultation was due to close on 17 April 2017, and further clarity on the areas to be funded and the mechanisms for accessing funding was expected in May.

16-17/65 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)

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

Social Sciences: A Faculty Research Impact Manager had been recruited, to start on 22 March.

Sciences:

- (a) **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**
- (b) The University would be hosting an EPSRC visit on 28 February.

Arts & Humanities

- (a) Professor Buchanan was acting as Interim Dean and Dr Giles as Acting Associate Dean (Research) during Professor Ormrod's leave of absence. Research matters would be handled jointly between the two roles, with Dr Giles acting as first point of contact.
- (b) Research income forecast meetings arising from the disaggregation of MTP were time-intensive and complex to organise; however the focus on research income had been helpful.
- (c) Research support staff: maternity cover for the HRC Impact Manager would be appointed, as would a new Research Co-Ordinator for pre and post award support and a five month Impact collation support post. It was noted that the HRC Research Development Manager was due to retire at the end of the year, and that Dr Giles' term as Deputy Director of the HRC was also due to come to an end. Replacement appointments would be needed.
- (d) Two successful HRC events were reported: a Proposition event on the Arts & Humanities and the environment, involving the Research Champions, and a Lightning Rod session on Europe.
- (e) **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**
- (f) Work was being undertaken to engage post-doc communities, alongside a similar initiative in the Social Sciences.

16-17/66 Report from the Dean of the York Graduate Research School.

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Dean of the York Graduate Research School, as follows:

- (a) The call for Leverhulme DTCs was now open, with a deadline of 18 July 2017. A planning meeting had been held in December and 14 expressions of interest had been received. The Dean of YGRS and the RDM for the Arts & Humanities would give one to one feedback to applicants towards the presentation stage, and applications would be narrowed down to three by March.
- (b) **Paragraph redacted - SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

- (c) **Paragraph redacted - SENSITIVE INFORMATION**
- (d) Work was underway to address the lack of explicit co-ordination between the University's Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure, applicable to researchers, and the Academic Misconduct policy, applicable to all students.
- (e) Two recently launched distance learning PGR programmes in Archaeology and in Computer Science had students registered.

16-17/67 Report from the Director of Research & Enterprise

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Director of Research & Enterprise, as follows:

(a) *Personnel:*

- i. Appointments within the Research Development team to cover the Social Sciences (Helen Wells) and Environment (David Diston) had commenced at the start of January. A further member of staff with responsibility for the Physical Sciences (Catherine Jardine) would start on 1 April;
- ii. Jennifer Gilmartin would take up post as Associate Director and Head of Research Services on 24 April;
- iii. An additional member of the IP and Legal team (Eoghan Gannon) had taken up post, looking after contract management associated with grants;
- iv. The section would be recruiting a joint RDM/BDM role for ICT, following the departure in March of the current post-holder, Jason Blenkinsop;
- v. **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**
- vi. The following priorities had been identified at the section's recent Strategic Planning Meeting:
 - REF2021;
 - Further support within the RGC and IP & Legal teams given the advent of GCRF and the expansion of UK Government and Health funding;
 - Support for research systems: a research systems 'hub', joint with IT Services, was proposed;
 - Implementation of the Learning Needs Analysis;
 - Support for research communications, co-ordinating work between Research & Enterprise and External Relations.For the short term, less focus had been placed on the Knowledge Transfer aspect of the section's work, pending the arrival of the new PVC for Partnership and Knowledge Exchange.

(b) *Funding calls:*

- i. Internally-managed funding calls were increasing, many involving a quick turnaround, supported primarily by the Research Development Team. This trend was likely to continue, particularly regarding funding made available by the

Research Councils. The Committee **noted** that an administrative ‘hub’ to coordinate internal funding calls was planned, and a paper would be brought to the next meeting regarding supporting processes. However, the Committee further **agreed** that higher level discussion was needed regarding the University’s strategic approach to these opportunities once a funding cycle had been completed. There was also a need to look at academic engagement with these opportunities and ensure that benefits were diffused across the institution as far as possible. It was **agreed** that these were cross-faculty issues for discussion by URC; Faculties themselves played a role in awareness raising, promoting opportunities, and encouraging departments to think about pipeline proposals and identifying capacity for rapid response.

- ii. The Business Development Team had been instrumental in winning a number of translational funding grants, including NERC Follow On Funding (£100k, Biology), Knowledge Transfer Partnership (£198k, Computer Science), NC3R (Environment, £100K) and MRC Confidence in Concept (£280k, Institutional), and had contributed to several other proposals still awaiting notification.

(c) *Business support*

- i. **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**
- ii. The Economic Development Team was supporting an ERDF-funded Capital Grants Scheme, encouraging engagement with local businesses and providing opportunities for further engagement.
- iii. The Director of Research & Enterprise and the Business Development Team were conducting a Science and Innovation Audit into the Bioeconomy of the North of England, led by the PVCRC.

It was **noted** that it was helpful to provide this level of detail for the Committee in written form: a written report from Research & Enterprise was requested for the Committee’s next meeting in March.

ACTION: MM

16-17/68 HEFCE Consultation on REF 2021

The Committee **considered** a draft University response to the HEFCE Consultation on REF2021 (RC.17-17/49).

It **noted** that UEB had considered the initial draft timetable for REF2021 oversight and submission, and that the minute of UEB’s discussion would be circulated to Committee members shortly for information. The key points were **noted** as follows:

- UEB was supportive of what was planned, but had raised concerns regarding the timing and function of a mock REF exercise;
- It had been decided that sign-off for the REF submission should sit with UEB;
- UEB, and the VC in particular, wished to be actively involved in drawing up the University’s response to the HEFCE Consultation;

- UEB had expressed support for the oversight structures proposed and the associated resource implications.

In relation to the draft University response, the Committee **noted** that:

- The draft had been informed by external discussion events hosted by HEFCE and the Russell Group and attended by members of the RSPO; and by recent discussions with Chairs of DRC at Research Forum;
- The various elements of Stern's proposals were interdependent and needed to be considered in the round;
- There were likely to be tensions between what was advantageous to the University, and what was advantageous to individual academics: these views would need to be balanced within the University's response;
- It was unlikely that Stern's recommendations would be implemented in full. It was important not to make strategic decisions based on the contents of the HEFCE consultation document, before details of REF 2021 were finalised.

Section redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION

It was **noted** that changes would be made to the University's draft response in the light of the Committee's comments, and the revised draft would be circulated to departments for comment over a 3 week consultation period. UEB would consider a further draft, and the final version would be considered for approval at the next meeting of URC on 10 March, prior to submission to HEFCE on 17 March 2017.

16-17/69 Oral report on proposals for REF2021 oversight and submission

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Research Strategy and Policy Manager regarding the proposals for REF2021 oversight and submission considered at its November 2016 meeting. It **noted** that these proposals had been considered by UEB and Senate, who had endorsed the establishment of a REF Strategy Working Group. The PVCr and the Associate Deans (Research) would work with the Research Strategy and Policy Manager to put together proposals for the membership and terms of reference for this Working Group, which would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

ACTION: Chair & Associate Deans (Research) with AG

16-17/70 Support for Early Career Researchers via Fellowships at York - FOI EXEMPT

16-17/71 Presentation on Project SYGMA.

The Committee **received** a presentation on progress with Project SYGMA. Mr Barrett and Mr Hudson attended the meeting for this item.

The Committee **noted** that Project SYGMA was now in its implementation phase, and the Worktribe system was due to go live on 1 August 2017, including data migration of in flight proposals and live projects from Agresso. A 'support hub' had been developed for Worktribe users, providing training and support materials for different roles. The Project's communications strategy was also noted.

The Chair congratulated the SYGMA team on the Project's progress. It was **noted** that the Associate Deans (Research) and FRGs would play a key role in terms of advocacy, emphasising benefits of the new system for both administrators and PIs within departments, and highlighting the support available. It was further **noted** that Worktribe was increasing market share within the sector, which provided the University with access to a national support network.

16-17/72 Applications and awards to end November 2016 - FOI EXEMPT

16-17/73 RCUK, Innovate UK and Wellcome Trust Awards benchmarking - FOI EXEMPT

16-17/74 Report on the University's Impact Conference held on 6 December 2016

Given timing constraints, consideration of this item was postponed to the Committee's next meeting on 10 March 2017.

16-17/75 Update on the Research Communications Strategy Project

The Committee **considered** an update on the Research Communications Strategy Project (RC.16-17/56). It **noted** the proposed framework for development of a research communications plan, including consultation with departments and FRGs. It further **noted** the importance of input at Faculty and University level.

The Committee **noted** that the aim of the Strategy was to provide greater support for academics, rather than reducing the control of the latter over communications relating to their own research. The recent review of marketing had focused on student recruitment in response to a steer from HoDs. **Sentence redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION.** It was **noted** that departments needed to make it clear if they wanted greater investment in research communications, and the Committee **agreed** that further work was needed in this area.

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

- i. There was a need to articulate better how the success of the Strategy would be measured. It was **noted** that the proposed Research Communications Operations Group would develop an Implementation Plan, including measures of success which would involve feedback from stakeholders.

- ii. Although the involvement of external consultancy could be beneficial, it was important that this did not delay action: there was much good practice already in existence which could be drawn upon.
- iii. The University could also raise its research profile and influence through other measures such as encouraging colleagues to participate on funding panels.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** the following:

- (a) Improvements had been made in the quality of online information relating to research at York, and this momentum needed to be sustained.
- (b) **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION.**
- (c) The Committee **approved** the proposed framework for development of a research communications plan, including the establishment of a Research Communications Strategy Group.

16-17/76 Report on recent developments in relation to research integrity

The Committee **received for information** a report on recent developments in relation to research integrity (RC.16-17/53).

16-17/77 Review of governance structures for research

The Committee **considered** a review of governance structures for research (RC.16-17/54). The following points were **noted**:

- a) Although the report set out useful operational work to be undertaken in relation to improving the functioning of research governance structures, broader issues regarding the authority and remit of Faculties, particularly in relation to departments, still needed to be clarified. These were strategic-level discussions for the attention of UEB. It was **noted** that the Faculty Deans were preparing a paper for UEB looking at the relationship between UEB, Faculty Executive Groups and departments, and that research governance could be raised as a related issue.
- b) The workload of the Associate Deans (Research) was still increasing in terms of the number of groups they were asked to attend. There was a need for those convening groups to be clear about why involvement of the Associate Deans (Research) was necessary, focusing on the capacity in which they were being asked to contribute.
- c) In the course of implementing the report's recommendations, it would be helpful to clarify to all colleagues involved that URC was not an appropriate route for disseminating information to departments.

The Committee **approved** the recommendations of the review, and **decided** that these should be implemented over the remaining academic year, to be in place from

the start of the academic year 2017/18. This work would be led by the Associate Deans (Research), with substantial support from the Research Strategy and Policy Office, including overall project management. It was confirmed that University Research Committee had responsibility for approving formal research governance structures, making recommendations to Senate where appropriate.

16-17/78 Post-REF Review action plan - CONFIDENTIAL

16-17/79 Post-REF Review action plan - CONFIDENTIAL

16-17/80 Post-REF Review action plan - CONFIDENTIAL

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

16-17/81 Progress report against the Post-REF Review Action Plan - CONFIDENTIAL

16-17/82 Outcomes of the University's bids to the WUN Research Development Fund 2017.

The Committee **received for information** a report on the outcomes of the University's bids to the WUN Research Development Fund 2017 (RC.16-17/61).

16-17/83 HEFCE Open Access requirements for REF: a 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.16-17/62).

16-17/84 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences

The Committee **received for information** the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 9 November 2016 (RC.16-17/63).

16-17/85 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences

The Committee **received for information** the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 20 October 2016 (RC.16-17/64).

16-17/86 Minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board

The Committee **received for information** the minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 28 November 2016 (RC.16-17/65).

16-17/87 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 17 November and 13 December 2016 (RC.16-17/66).

16-17/88 Next meeting

The Committee **noted** details of its next meeting: Friday 10 March 2017 at 1pm in H/G17, Heslington Hall.

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February 2017