

**UNIVERSITY OF YORK**

**Senate**

**RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2017**

- Present:** Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)  
Dean, York Graduate Research School  
Dean, Faculty of Sciences  
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences  
Acting Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts & Humanities  
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Sciences  
Professor Nik Brown  
Professor Jason Edwards  
Professor Mat Evans (M16-17/112 - 123 only)  
Professor Maria Goddard  
Dr Mary Leng  
Professor William McGuire  
Professor Jenny Steele  
Professor Elizabeth Tyler  
Director of Research & Enterprise  
Associate Director and Head of Research Services  
Research Strategy and Policy Manager
- In attendance:** Dr Helen Jones (M16-17/123 & 124 only)  
Mrs Tracy Dancer (M16-17/123 & 124 only)  
Ms Kirsty Dillingham (M16-17/125 & 126 only)  
Dr Alice Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Professors Buchanan and White.

**16-17/112 Membership and declarations of interest**

The Chair welcomed Mrs Jenny Gilmartin, Associate Director and Head of Research Services, to the Committee.

Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting.

**16-17/113 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2017**

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2017 (RC.16-17/86).

#### **16-17/114 Research Committee action log**

The Committee **received** a progress report against its action log for 2016/17 (RC.16-17/87). It **noted** that a substantial number of items had been completed since the March meeting. It further **noted** specific developments as follows:

- M14-15/70 Review of the role of central research services in helping staff identify appropriate funding: further progress was expected in due course now that the new Associate Director and Head of Research Services was in post;
- M16-17/79 Post-REF Review action plan – **redacted - CONFIDENTIAL**

#### **16-17/115 Report from the Chair**

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

- (a) REF2021: owing to the forthcoming General Election, the civil service was in purdah as of the previous Friday. An update regarding the fate of the HE Bill was expected by the end of the week. The House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee enquiry on research integrity had been stood down.
- (b) Revised rubric for RPF 2017 had been signed off by Chair's action in consultation with Associate Deans (Research): the changes were in line with the generic proposals approved by URC at its March meeting. The 2017 RPF round was due to launch to departments at the beginning of May.
- (c) A discussion on priorities for research communications had taken place at Research Forum, reinforcing the need to work with academics and identifying quick wins for work in this area. The first meeting of the Research Communications Strategy Group would take place in May, chaired by the PVC for Research.
- (d) It was **reported** that Professor Jon Timmis had been appointed as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange, starting on 1 August. The Chair would discuss with Professor Timmis the addition of this role to URC's membership.

**ACTION: Chair**

#### **16-17/116 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research) – FOI EXEMPT**

#### **16-17/117 Report from the Dean of the York Graduate Research School - FOI EXEMPT**

#### **16-17/118 Report from the Director of Research & Enterprise – FOI EXEMPT**

## 16-17/119 Research Entities project: operational phase

The Committee **considered** a report on the operational phase of the research entities project (RC.16-17/88). It **noted** that the report developed the recommendations of the Research Entities Working Group considered at the URC meeting on 17 November 2016.

The Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) The list of all research entities across the institution provided as Appendix V was broadly complete, containing 137 entities of 10 types, each falling into one of three different governance and communication models. Classification for the six existing IDCs had been proposed, and during implementation, these entities would have the opportunity to appeal against their classification. It was clarified that once the proposed model was in place, the term 'interdisciplinary research centre' would no longer be in use.
- (b) It was proposed that the new model would be in place from September 2017, reflected in the revised presentation of research entities on departmental and institutional webpages. Processes for review, change of status and the approval of new entities would also be rolled out. Where changes to governance arrangements were required, these would need to be in place in time for the ADRR process in 2018. The Committee further **noted** the processes for winding down redundant research entities according to the relevant governance model.
- (c) The consultation process had not identified any major points of contention across Faculties, although within the Arts and Humanities, discussions were still ongoing regarding period-based centres.

The Committee **approved** the seven recommendations of the Research Entities Working Group as set out in the report, with the proviso that FRGs were not currently convened as bodies with a formal governance role. Checking of research entities in Governance model 2 would therefore be undertaken by the Associate Deans (Research), reporting to URC as part of the ADRR process.

The Committee further **noted** the following:

- Where entities in Governance models 2 and 3 required a change in their current governance arrangements, support would be needed from the appropriate central services in order to develop and implement the revised models.
- The University's two teaching-only Centres were not included within the remit of the report. It was suggested that the report should be referred to the PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students, in order to consider whether the governance and communication structures for teaching-only Centres might be aligned with those proposed for research entities.

The Committee **noted** that the Research Entities Working Group would be meeting at the end of the week to finalise the report in light of URC's comments, and **agreed**

that the finalised recommendations would be approved via Chair's action. The report and its recommendations would then be referred to UEB for consideration.

#### **16-17/120 University response to the REF 2021 consultation**

The Committee **received** for information the final version of the University's response to the REF2021 consultation, as signed off by the Vice-Chancellor and UEB (RC.16-17/89). It **noted** that a copy of the response would be made available internally.

##### **ACTION: AG**

The Committee further **noted** that:

- Concern had been expressed nationally regarding the definition of research-active staff, in terms of which staff should be included in the REF2021 return;
- HEFCE had been expected to publish details of REF2021 in the summer, but some delay was now anticipated owing to the General Election. This was likely to affect plans for a pilot exercise on institutional level case studies originally suggested for September and October, and it was possible that this element of REF2021 might be dropped altogether.

#### **16-17/121 Membership and terms of reference of the REF Strategy Working Group.**

The Committee **considered** proposals for the membership and terms of reference of the REF Strategy Working Group (RC.16-17/90). It **noted** that this item had been postponed from the March 2017 meeting of URC.

The Committee **noted** that the first meeting of the REF Strategy Working Group would take place on Friday 28 April 2017. The Group would determine membership and terms of reference for the REF Operations Group. Decision-making in relation to REF2021 would continue to be the responsibility of URC.

The Committee **agreed** that the terms of reference for the REF Strategy Working Group should include appropriate acknowledgement of equality and diversity considerations.

##### **ACTION: AG**

#### **Section redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

#### **16-17/122 Proposals for the REF preparedness exercise - COMMERCIAL SENSITIVE**

#### **16-17/123 Report on the REF Impact case study scoping exercise - FOI EXEMPT**

#### **16-17/124 Delivery plan for the Strategic Framework for Impact**

The Committee **considered** a delivery plan for the University's Strategic Framework for Impact (RC.16-17/93). Dr Jones and Mrs Dancer attended the meeting for this item.

The Committee commended the proposed delivery plan, noting that it had been developed with significant input from the Research Impact Advisory Group. It **approved** the delivery plan, subject to the following minor revisions:

- (a) Adjustment of the language to focus on *quality* impact with reach and significance;
- (b) Clarification of references to *research* students within the Impact Indicators;
- (c) Removal of Appendix 2, given that the available information was incomplete;
- (d) Inclusion of a date for the current iteration.

The Committee further **noted** the plan's references to the new PVC for Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange, and recommended that Professor Timmis should have the opportunity to comment on the plan prior to its launch via the Faculties.

**ACTION: HJ**

The Committee **noted** that the plan would be revisited early in 2018; in the meantime, data indicators for 2015-16 would be presented as Cat 2 business to the URC meeting in September 2017.

#### **16-17/125 Applications and awards to end February 2017 - FOI EXEMPT**

#### **16-17/126 In-year income to end January 2017 - FOI EXEMPT**

### **CATEGORY II BUSINESS**

#### **16-17/127 Amendments to the University's *Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance***

The Committee **received** for information amendments to the University's *Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance* as approved by Council at its meeting on 3 March 2017 (RC.16-17/96).

#### **16-17/128 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 20 March 2017.**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 20 March 2017 (RC.16-17/97).

**16-17/129 Minutes of the meeting of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee held on 27 February 2017.**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee held on 27 February 2017 (RC.16-17/98).

**16-17/130 Minutes of the meeting of the Global Challenges Research Fund Steering Group held on 24 March 2017.**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Global Challenges Research Fund Steering Group held on 24 March 2017 (RC.16-17/99).

**16-17/131 Minutes of the meeting of the Research Excellence Training Steering Group held on 5 April 2017.**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Research Excellence Training Steering Group held on 5 April 2017 (RC.16-17/100).

**16-17/132 HEFCE Open Access requirements for REF: 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.16-17/101).

**16-17/133 Next meeting**

The Committee **noted** details of the next meeting: Wednesday 28 June 2017 at 2pm in H/G17, Heslington Hall.

aw/aw  
May 2017