

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2018

Present: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor D Smith (Chair)
Dean, York Graduate Research School, Professor T Stoneham
Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor S Bell
Dean, Faculty of Arts & Humanities, Professor J Buchanan
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences, Professor C Brown
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Sciences,
Professor M Festenstein
Acting Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts & Humanities,
Dr K Giles (to M17-18/129 only)
Professor D Barnett
Professor M Evans
Professor M Goddard
Dr M Leng (to M17-18/128 only)
Professor J Steele
Professor E Tyler
Professor P White
Acting Director of Research & Enterprise, Ms J Gilmartin
Research Strategy and Policy Manager, Ms A Grey

In attendance: Dr R Curwen (M17-18/122 only)
Ms R Fleming (M17-18/125 only)
Mr E Kirby (M17-18/126 only)
Ms K Dillingham (M17-18/127 only)
Dr C Fonge (M17-18/128 only)
Mr D Burt (M17-18/128 only)
Dr E Barnes (M17-18/129 only)
Dr A Clunes (M17-18/129 only)
Dr A Wakely (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor W McGuire, Professor N Brown, Professor J Timmis and Professor B Fulton.

17-18/113 Declaration of conflicts of interest

Members were reminded of the Committee's procedures for handling potential/actual conflicts of interest.

17-18/114 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2018

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2018 (RC.17-18/92), subject to the following amendments:

- M17-18/98: removal of the reference to tax rates.
- M17-18/103: clarification that the Committee's comments were directed at the GDPR working group rather than specific individuals.

17-18/115 Research Committee action log

The Committee **received** a progress report against its action log for 2017/18 (RC.17-18/93).

17-18/116 Report from the Chair

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

- (a) The University's Leverhulme Centre bid, *Biodiversity in the Anthropocene* led by Professor Chris Thomas (Biology), had reached a shortlist of six: interviews would take place on 6 November. The Committee thanked Professor Thomas for his leadership, drawing in staff from across all three Faculties, including Dr Mark Jenner and Professor Kate Pickett as Co-Is. The Committee **noted** that successful bids would be supported by a 10 year funding commitment. It **agreed** that the expression of interest should be circulated to members for information.
ACTION: Chair
- (b) Information had been circulated to departments regarding UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships. The Committee **noted** that the field was likely to be very competitive and that departments should be encouraged to put forward only the very best candidates.
- (c) Research England had launched a £75m Expanding Excellence Fund to support the development of small scale areas of research excellence identified from REF2014. It was **noted** that the opportunity had been discussed in detail by the PVC(R) and the Associate Deans, who had decided that York applications were unlikely to be successful, given that York was already identified as a research-intensive institution that would be investing in areas of research excellence appropriately.
- (d) Minor modifications to the University's Human Tissue Act Manual had been approved by Chair's action, to reflect recent changes to University personnel and alterations to the numbering systems for the national HTA Codes of Practice.
- (e) Two Twitter accounts were to be set up: Research@York and Impact@York, the latter to include content relating to knowledge exchange and to be managed by the Impact Managers. It was **noted** that the Research Councils and other national bodies such as UKRI increasingly used Twitter as a source of information on research and impact. The Research Champions were keen to engage with these feeds as opposed to creating their

own. The Committee **noted** the need to keep an eye on the workload involved: a single full feed was preferable to two with insufficient content readily available. The process for generating outputs would be confirmed with the RDMs and the Research Marketing team; opportunities to retweet content from departments and research centres would also be explored.

17-18/117 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)

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

Social Sciences:

- (a) The post of Faculty Impact Manager for the Social Sciences was now vacant and would be advertised shortly.
- (b) The University had been awarded £100k of ESRC IAA Business Boost funding, alongside similar awards to Leeds and Sheffield in the White Rose DTP. The RDM and BDM teams were thanked for their work in preparing the bid.
- (c) The White Rose DTP had awarded seven ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowships: four to Sheffield, one to Leeds and two to York, one of which was tied to the Industrial Strategy. Of the York Fellows, one was a new appointment (in SPSW) and the other a current PhD student (in Economics).

Arts & Humanities:

- (a) The role of Faculty Impact Manager for the Arts & Humanities had been advertised and shortlisting was taking place.
- (b) The Dean for the Faculty of Arts & Humanities reported that Dr Giles would complete her term as Acting Associate Dean (Research) and Director of the HRC at the end of September 2018. Professor R Ogden (Language and Linguistic Science) would take on both roles from 1 January 2019. In the interim 3 months, the roles would be covered by Professor D Barnett. It was **agreed** that an additional URC member from the Arts & Humanities should be sought for the autumn term 2018, in order to maintain the balance of representation across the Faculties.

ACTION: Chair & Secretary to notify Senate

17-18/118 Report from the Dean of the York Graduate Research School

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

- (a) During a visit by the YGRS Dean to the Chinese Scholarship Council in March, the Council had encouraged the University to put forward greater numbers of high quality student candidates.
- (b) Decisions were awaited from the Research Councils concerning studentships. AHRC had signalled that decisions might be delayed until the UKRI Board had met in September.
- (c) A paper on Visiting PhD students would be going to FRGs for consultation.

17-18/119 Report from the Acting Director of Research & Enterprise (FOI EXEMPT)

17-18/120 Industrial Strategy (CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT)

17-18/121 GCRF QR Strategy (CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT)

17-18/122 Interim review of the University Research Themes, August 2015 - December 2017 (CONFIDENTIAL)

17-18/123 Report on the Biomedical Research Strategy: Phase 2 (STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT)

17-18/124 Proposals for the establishment of a Policy Unit

The Committee **considered** proposals for the establishment of a Policy Unit (RC.17-18/99). It **noted** that the proposals had arisen from discussions between the Associate Deans (Research), the PVCr, colleagues within Research & Enterprise and the Impact Managers, to bring together the University's strengths across Faculties. Two models of policy unit were presented for consideration; it was **noted** that examples at comparator institutions such as Southampton and Nottingham were more in line with Model 2.

The Committee further **noted** that, given the Knowledge Exchange aspect of the University Strategy was currently in flux, it was appropriate for URC to take the lead on a Policy Unit initiative at the present time.

In the course of discussion, the following views were expressed:

- (a) Although profile-raising, badging and pooling of expertise would be helpful, there was a risk that drawing in other more generic elements such as marketing, impact and training would result in confusion over the appropriate point of contact for the latter elements.
- (b) Light touch oversight and co-ordination of external collaborations and contacts would be useful, but it would not be a good use of resource to prepare briefing notes on all eligible research papers, given the difficulty of securing engagement with the latter. Efforts should be focused on specific areas where influence could realistically be achieved.
- (c) The capacity-building element of Model 2 would be useful in terms of supporting future Impact in new areas.
- (d) Structures were needed to propagate successful practice from CHE and SPRU, and to support departments who wished to move further into the policy arena.
- (e) The University should think strategically about current opportunities in the policy area e.g. the new Cambridge Institute for Public Policy was aligned with the themes of the Industrial Strategy.
- (f) Alternatives to the term 'Unit' should be considered.

The Committee **agreed** its support in principle for the development of a York Policy Unit. It **decided** that more detailed proposals for Model 1, including costings, should be developed in consultation with the PVC for Partnerships & Knowledge Exchange and other stakeholders, and brought back to the Committee for further consideration.

ACTION: MF

17-18/125 Departmental research income targets (CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT)

17-18/126 Report from the REF Strategy Group and proposals for the REF Check Exercise 2018 (CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT)

17-18/127 In-year income to end January 2018 (FOI EXEMPT)

17-18/128 Issues arising from GDPR in relation to research

The Committee **considered** a paper on the main issues arising from GDPR in relation to research (RC.17-18/103). Dr Fonge and Mr Burt attended the meeting for this item.

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

- (a) Guidance was being made available to address the key implications for research arising from GDPR; there was now a need to embed this within University procedures as efficiently as possible. At a recent meeting between departmental/subject-level ethics committee chairs and the Information Governance Officer, it had been agreed that screening questions for Data Privacy Impact Assessments and privacy by design/default would be embedded into ethics processes. Where high risk projects were identified via the screening process, a template was provided for referral to the University's Data Protection Officer (DPO). The Information Governance Officer was covering the DPO role for six months prior to the recruitment of a University Chief Legal Officer. The Committee **noted** that embedding DPIA screening in ethics processes would demonstrate compliance in the short term; in the longer term, GDPR compliance would need to be the first consideration for any project whether or not it required formal ethical review. The Committee further **noted** that individual departments' concerns regarding GDPR and the implications for ethics frameworks had also been addressed at the above meeting.
- (b) The views of the Chair of University Ethics Committee were **noted**: that much existing research (e.g. applied health) was already compliant with GDPR requirements, but colleagues from other disciplines might need further support – examples of good practice were readily available.
- (c) There was further work to be done to address implications regarding the use of data from other organisations, and data management planning support.
- (d) The University planned to procure a training package from an external provider with a three-year shelf life and develop an in-house tutorial in the longer term. Additional support would also be provided to supplement the tutorial provision.

- (e) 25 May 2018 should be viewed as the starting date for the process of introducing full GDPR compliance.

Regarding the paper's recommendations, the Committee **agreed** the following:

1. The proposed review of existing processes and structures for developing and delivering research projects and collaborations in order to embed 'privacy by design and default' and documentation requirements should be fed into the current review of ethics governance, led by the Registrar;

ACTION: Chair & AW

2. A working group should be set up to consider the best way to document the records, datasets and sharing arrangements for research projects;
3. A resource bank should be compiled to support academics better in all areas of University research on which GDPR has a bearing.

ACTION: RSPO, Library Research Support Team, University RDM group, Records Management and RETT to work together and report back on progress at the October URC meeting.

17-18/129 High Performance Computing Procurement (CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT)

17-18/130 San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

The Committee **approved** the University's endorsement of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), noting that University policy on research metrics was already DORA-compliant, and that Research England was promoting DORA as a way to demonstrate a commitment to robust assessment of research quality.

ACTION: RSPO

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

17-18/131 HEFCE Open Access requirements for REF

The Committee **received** for information a quarterly report on rates of deposit in PURE relating to HEFCE Open Access requirements for REF (RC.17-18/105).

17-18/132 Minutes of the GCRF Steering Group

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the GCRF Steering Group held on 28 March 2018 (RC.17-18/106).

17-18/133 Minutes of the Research Communications Strategy Group

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Research Communications Strategy Group held on 12 March 2018 (RC.17-18/107).

17-18/134 Minutes of the RET Steering Group

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the RET Steering Group held on 14 February 2018 (RC.17-18/108).

17-18/135 Minutes 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 21 February 2018 (RC.17-18/109).

17-18/136 Next meeting

The Committee **noted** details of the next meeting: Wednesday 20 June 2018 at 2.15pm in HG17, Heslington Hall.

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May 2018