

# UNIVERSITY OF YORK

## Senate

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

#### Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019

**Present:** Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor D Smith (Chair)  
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences, Professor C Brown  
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Sciences,  
Professor M Festenstein  
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts & Humanities,  
Professor R Ogden  
Dean, York Graduate Research School, Professor T Stoneham  
Professor D Barnett  
Professor S Smith  
Professor J Thijssen  
Professor S Carroll  
Professor J Steele (M19-20/11 onwards)  
Professor P White  
Professor E Tyler (M19-20/01-16 only)  
Director of Research & Enterprise, Dr D McBeth  
Associate Director of Research & Enterprise, Ms J Gilmartin  
Research Strategy and Policy Manager, Ms A Grey

**In attendance:** Ms Z Clarke (Secretary)  
Dr R Curwen (M19-20/11 only)  
Dr Linda Ko Ferrigno (M19-20/13 and 14 only)  
Emma Montgomery (M19-20/15 only)  
Masud Khokhar (M19-20/16 only)  
Mr E Kirby (M19-20/20 and 21 only)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor M Goddard, Professor M Evans, and Professor Brian Fulton.

#### 19-20/01 Membership and terms of reference

The Committee **received** details of its membership and terms of reference, and **noted** members' roles and responsibilities (RC.18-19/01). The following points were further **noted**:

- (a) There was a need to adjust the Terms of Reference slightly to (i) better reflect the increased emphasis on research integrity and (ii) tighten up the reporting routes for the Committee (for example, removing the reference to Planning Committee). The Committee agreed that these changes would be made by RSPO and approved by the Chair.

**ACTION: RSPO**

- (b) The list of sub-committees reporting to the Committee would be updated to include the Mental Health Research Strategy Group (MHRSG) and the Centre for Future Health Steering Group (CFHSG).

**ACTION: ZC**

- (c) The position of 'Pro-Vice Chancellor for Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange' would be corrected to 'Pro-Vice Chancellor for Partnerships and Engagement' to reflect the change in title.

**ACTION: ZC**

- (d) There was a least one research-only department scheduled for strategic review over the next year, a process currently co-ordinated by Planning Committee. It was agreed that the Research Strategy and Policy Manager would speak to the Director of Planning about the possibility of a joint-review with University Research Committee.

**ACTION: AG**

**19-20/02 Declaration of conflicts of interest**

Members of the Committee were reminded of the procedure for declaring potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting.

**19-20/03 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019**

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019 (RC.19-20/02).

**19-20/04 Research Committee action log**

The Committee **received** a progress report against its action log for 2019/20 (RC.18-19/03). Further to the information provided, the Committee **noted** the following:

- The action noted for M18-19/13 – regarding the proposed analysis of studentships – should be updated to reflect the further action that would take place, involving the review of data by departments and consideration by the YGRS Board.

**ACTION: ZC**

- The action noted for M18-19/58 – regarding follow-up on the Vitae Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers – should be updated to reflect the need for the Committee to receive an update.

**ACTION: ZC**

- Work on non-R coded work (M18-19/96) was being taken forward this month.

**19-20/05 Report from the Chair**

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Chair. The following points were noted:

- Annual ethical returns would be submitted as normal. In the absence of a University Ethics Committee, RSPO would co-ordinate the returns and the establishment of a task-and-finish panel, composed of URC members, to review them and feed any issues into the Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee (AECC). The Committee

**approved** this proposal, noting the need to be vigilant whilst the University transitions between ethical structures.

**ACTION: RSPO**

- A response to a Wellcome Trust survey regarding the Trust's Bullying and Harassment Policy had been completed by RSPO and HR. The response noted sector-wide concerns regarding data protection and the requirement to pass information on individuals to Wellcome. The Committee **emphasised** support for the policy, but noted further clarification was needed in this area. The implementation plan previously requested of HR (M18-19/141) would continue to be developed following feedback from Wellcome.
- RSPO had fed into a consultation on Research England Terms and Conditions, which had potential reporting implications regarding safeguarding. A watchful eye would be kept on this space.
- The paper on support for Fellowships at York that had been considered by the Committee in June (M18-19/152) had been approved by UEB on 1 October, including approval for a 0.5FTE post to support efforts to make resources for Fellowships more available across the institution. The programme would be managed by Research and Enterprise.
- The Committee **welcomed** the proposals laid out by the new Vice-Chancellor in his inaugural speech, noting the clear remit for change and the exciting initiatives that such a focus would support.

**19-20/06 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research) (Confidential & FOI Exempt)**

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

*Sciences*

The following points were **noted**:

- This was Professor Sarah Thompson's first meeting as Associate Dean (Research) for the Sciences. The Committee welcomed Professor Thompson, and thanked Professor Brown for his excellent work in the role.
- A survey of departmental requirements in the Faculty of Sciences related to post-award support has been undertaken and exposed several operational concerns. This has been shared with RGC and work is ongoing to explore solutions.
- An EPSRC visit was due to take place on 29 October, which would involve the Deputy CEO, Director Research Base, Head of Business Engagement and Industrial Strategy, as well as the Head of Healthcare Technologies and institutional contact, plus a range of external business partners.
- A BBSRC Expert group, mirroring that which already exists for EPSRC, had been established within the University to enable further engagement with the Research Council. A visit from NERC is now scheduled for January 2020.
- The Government announcement of the £220M Nuclear Fusion STEP programme was an exciting opportunity for departments. The Faculty intends to bring together staff

under the Technologies of the Future theme to aid involvement. *[Sentence redacted for reasons of confidentiality.]*

#### *Social Sciences*

- The Policy Institute would soon recruit two academic leads. Support staff had already been recruited, and the Institute was expected to be launched in January in time for the Impact Conference in March (discussed later in the agenda).
- The ReCSS review was still in train – although it had slowed down slightly in recent months due to other commitments, it would be prioritised during the autumn term.
- An ESRC Festival of Social Sciences was scheduled for the first week of November, which would highlight research within the departments and GCRF activities.
- The White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership was up for renewal, and the Associate Dean (Research) would be involved in this process.

#### *Arts & Humanities*

- The HRC 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration would take place on 18 October. All were welcome to attend.
- *[This section of the minute has been redacted for reasons of confidentiality].*
- A review of space in the HRC was ongoing also, to ensure the Faculty was able to make the most of what was available. The Committee **noted** the importance of finding an accurate and usable solution, commenting that the review may therefore be a lengthy process.

### **19-20/07 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, in which the following points were **noted**:

(a) The University had been ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of 107 institutions in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey. The reported rate of satisfaction (84%) was above the Russell Group average, and York was in the top 20 in terms of resources, research culture and supervision. The University was in the top quartile of the Russell Group (i.e. top 5) across most of the indicators, and was first for supervisor skills/knowledge. Although there were some reservations about the data, the Committee **noted** the importance of the result as an indicator of student experience. The results would be reported to Senate, and to departments via individual memos. The University had, however, performed poorly in the student wellbeing questions, and the lack of alignment of this result with high scores across other indicators would need further investigation as a priority. An audit of University provision was currently ongoing.

#### **ACTION: TS**

(b) A proposal led by Green Chemistry has reached the second round of an EPSRC Mobility Pilot supporting non-standard entry into doctorates in the interest of mobility between sectors. The Green Chemistry proposal works with several industrial partners and aims to develop individual learning contracts and recognition of prior learning in the workplace. The pilot would be hugely beneficial in finding ways to meet the Industrial Strategy target of raising Government investment in R&D by 2.4% by 2027.

**19-20/08 Report from the Director of Research & Enterprise (FOI Exempt)**

The Committee **received** a report on recent activity in the Research & Enterprise Directorate (RC.19-20/04) (FOI Exempt), **noting** the following in particular:

- (a) A new post in RSPO had been approved in order to support the AECC. The IP and Legal team would also recruit a 0.5FTE staff member to support compliance.
- (b) The focus on Research Grants and Contracts and the IP and Legal team in the MTP process reflected the priorities at the time of the Director of Research and Enterprise's arrival. Providing capacity in both teams would help assuage many issues arising out of departments regarding the timeliness of support with contracts.
- (c) The Director highlighted the ongoing work on reducing staff turnover. Matthew Just of the IP and Legal team would be leaving the University at the end of November; the Committee noted the experience held by Mr Just, and the potential challenge of replacing him.
- (d) A number of valuable grants were reported to the Committee, with acknowledgement that the process of winning the Creat:KE grant had highlighted areas for improvement. A new process for preparing grants was in development, which would include the presence of Faculties and Estates at kick-off meetings to ensure all parties are informed from the outset.

**ACTION: JG**

- (e) The report highlighted a number of recent wins for the University. The University continued to build upon its strong reputation with GCRF with a further GCRF Translational Award won in the first round of awards of this type. Further, two high-profile competition successes were noted. The Enterprise Fellowships scheme had received the UK National Award for 'Internal KE Initiative of the Year' at PraxisAURIL. A York post-doctoral researcher had also been named overall winner in the UK Falling Walls Lab.

**19-20/09 Research grant applications and awards: Full year 2018/19 and previous 4 year comparisons (Fol EXEMPT)**

*[Item redacted due to FOI exemption].*

**19-20/10 Research income 2018/2019 and projections for the 2019/20 year (FOI Exempt)**

The Committee **considered** a report on research income 2018/19 and projections for the 2019/20 year (RC.18-19/06) (FOI Exempt). The Committee **noted** that the information required to present such granular data was available but could not be pulled out regularly. The hard work of colleagues in gathering together the data for the paper was **noted**.

*[Section redacted for reasons of confidentiality].*

**19-20/11 University Research Strategy: report against KPIs for 2018/19 and Theme metrics data (FOI Exempt)**

*Item redacted – FoI Exempt*

#### **19-20/12 Proposed priorities for the 2019/20 year**

The Committee **considered** proposed priorities for the 2019/20 academic year (RC.18-19/08), and **noted** the following:

- (a) The importance of submitting a successful REF return was emphasised, and the Committee **noted** that this would be a prominent feature of the Committee's activities this year.
- (b) A brief overview of activity against the 2018/19 priorities was provided. Regarding the note that a "holistic view" of research funding was achieved via the introduction of a new process (RC.18-19/81), it was clarified that this new pump priming process had not yet been implemented. The Committee decided that more work was needed to refine the process in question to ensure it is robust and streamlined.  
**ACTION: DMcB to take the lead**
- (c) It was noted that a multi-directorate policy regarding PGR specific aspects of the management of bursaries was currently under development.

#### **19-20/13 Strategic Framework for Impact evaluation (FOI Exempt)**

The Committee **considered** data indicator comparisons for the Strategic Framework for Impact evaluation (RC.18-19/09). The University Impact Officer attended for this item. In addition to the information presented in the paper, the Committee **noted** the following:

*[Section redacted due to FOI exemption].*

#### **19-20/14 Proposals for the 2020 Impact Conference**

The Committee **approved** proposals for the 2020 Impact Conference (RC.18-19/10). The University Impact Officer attended for this item. It was noted that the Conference had initially been intended to have more space for discussion, however this had been rethought due to plans for the Policy Institute to host discussion and training events later in the year.

#### **19-20/15 Oral update on the small grants proposal**

The Committee **received** an oral report on the management of small grants. The RGC Operations Manager attended to speak to this item. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) RGC light-touch checks would continue as normal for the next 12 months, in light of an increased emphasis on due diligence from external funders and regulators.
- (b) The monetary value of a grant did not equate to the risk attached to the particular proposal. Finding a way in which to effectively assess risk was key. A new staff member, starting on the following Monday, would pick up this piece of work.

**ACTION: EM, JG**

#### **19-20/16 Update on the Open Research Strategy Group**

The Committee **received** an update on the development of the Open Research Strategy Group (ORSG) (RC.18-19/11). The Director of Library and Archives attended to speak to this item. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) Following on from a previous paper presented to URC (RC.18-19/57), the first meeting of the ORSG had since taken place, and the decision had been taken to produce a Statement of Intent on Open Research rather than a Code of Practice, as this would allow for a more positive, cultural approach. The Committee **noted** that there was a range of good examples produced by other Universities from which the ORSG could draw inspiration.
- (b) The membership of the ORSG was clarified. There would be an ECR representative on the Group, which would be selected via recommendations from Chairs of Departmental Research Committees. The Director of Library and Archives reported that the member from Education was intended as a representative of the grassroots Open Research initiative within the department, rather than as the Faculty representative, but would follow up on this. The ORSG recognised interdisciplinary differences and would account for these.

**ACTION: MK**

- (c) It was **clarified** that the ORSG would report to URC.

**ACTION: ZC to add to list of sub-committees**

The Committee **approved** the production of a Statement of Intent.

**ACTION: MK, ST**

**19-20/17 Report on the 2019 ADRR Process (FOI Exempt)**

*[Item redacted for reasons of confidentiality].*

**19-20/18 Report on Research Entities Governance Model 1 and 2 (FOI Exempt)**

*[Item redacted for reasons of confidentiality].*

**19-20/19 Report on Research Entities Governance Model 3 (FOI Exempt)**

*[Item redacted for reasons of confidentiality].*

**19-20/20 Minutes of the REF Strategy Group meetings on 6 June 2019 and 14 August 2019**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meetings of REF Strategy Group from 6 June 2019 and 14 August 2019 (RC.18-19/15). The University REF Manager attended for this item. Further to the information presented in the minutes, an update was provided on the most recent REF Strategy Group meeting on 4 October 2019. The Committee **noted** the following points in particular:

- (a) The meeting on 4 October outlined the timeline of upcoming REF deadlines. The survey of submission intentions was the next large deadline the University was working towards, and was due on 6 December 2019. RSPO had pre-populated all but one field

so the main duty of departments would be to check the information circulated, to be distributed by 11 October.

- (b) Issues had been raised regarding small unit requests and the boundaries between units. Information on the latter would be circulated by 11 October as well.

**19-20/21 Update on the Mock REF and actions arising**

*[Item redacted due to FOI exemption].*

**CATEGORY II BUSINESS**

**19-20/22 Minutes of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 28 May 2019.**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 28 May 2019 (RC.17-18/17).

**19-20/23 HEFCE Open Access requirements for REF: to receive for information a quarterly report on rates of deposit in PURE.**

The Committee **received** for information a quarterly report on rates of deposit in PURE (RC.19-20/18).

**19-20/24 Minutes of the GCRF Steering Group meetings held on 25 July 2019 and 4 September 2019.**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meetings of the GCRF Steering Group meetings held on 25 July 2019 and 4 September 2019 (RC.18-19/19).

**19-20/25 Minutes of the Research Communications Strategy Group meeting held on 29 July 2019.**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Research Communications Strategy Group meeting held on 29 July 2019 (RC.18-19/20).

**19-20/26 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences meeting held on 4 September 2019.**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 4 September 2019 (RC.18-19/21).

**19-20/27 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences meeting held on 18 September 2019.**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 18 September 2019 (RC.18-19/22).

**19-20/28 Next meeting**



The Committee noted details of the next meeting: Tuesday 10 December 2019 at 2.00pm in H/G09, Heslington Hall.

**zc/zc**

June 2019