

# UNIVERSITY OF YORK

## Senate

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

#### Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 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  
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,  
Professor D Barnett  
Professor S Carroll  
Dr J Finch (M18-19/36 – M18-19/53 only)  
Professor M Goddard  
Professor S Smith  
Professor J Steele  
Professor J Thijssen  
Professor P White  
Acting Director of Research & Enterprise, Ms J Gilmartin  
Research Strategy and Policy Manager, Ms A Grey

**In attendance:** Dr A Wakely (Secretary)  
Mr S Gardner  
Dr R Abeysekera (M18-19/43 only)  
Dr R Curwen (M18-19/43 – M18-19/45 only)  
Mr E Kirby (M18-19/48 – M18-19/49 only)  
Ms K Dillingham (M18-19/50 only)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor M Evans, Professor A Field, Professor B Fulton, Professor J Timmis and Professor E Tyler.

#### **18-19/36 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.

#### **18-19/37 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2018**

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2018 (RC.18-19/28).

## 18-19/38 Research Committee action log

The Committee **received** a progress report against its action log for 2018/19 (RC.18-19/29).

## 18-19/39 Report from the Chair

The Committee **received** an oral report on recent developments from the Chair, noting the following:

- (a) The consultation period on the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor was underway, and Perrett Laver had been appointed to assist with the process. It was the Chair of Council's expectation that a new appointment would be recommended by the end of March.
- (b) Developments relating to open access and Plan S had been discussed at a recent meeting of Russell Group PVCs. The Director of Library and Archives would be invited to the Committee's next meeting in January to talk about open access developments. The Committee further **noted** that the University budget for supporting open access was nearly spent.

**ACTION: Chair to investigate further**

- (c) The Wellcome policy relating to harassment and bullying was **noted**: there was a need to review the University's current suite of policies to ensure that they were fit for purpose and that appropriate processes were in place for informing funders as required.

**ACTION: RSPO**

- (d) Vitae was conducting a consultation on the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, with a deadline for responses in early January. A key recommendation was that all postdocs should have 20% of their time allocated for development of their research career. The Head of RETT was co-ordinating the University's response and would be attending the next meeting of Research Forum to discuss a draft response with CDRCs, who would be asked to share the information with departments. Input had also been sought from research staff liaison officers. A report on the University's response would be provided for the Committee's next meeting.

**ACTION: KVC**

- (e) Further to the hypothecation of a proportion of QR funding, the Executive Chair of Research England had indicated that HEIs would be asked to describe in greater detail their overall QR expenditure. The Chair would continue to monitor developments in this area.

## 18-19/40 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)

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

### *Sciences*

- (a) Two DTPs in which York was a partner had successfully applied to NERC for renewal: ACCE, led by Liverpool (quota of 14 students per year) and PANORAMA (previously SPHERES), led by Leeds (quota of 13 students per year, reduced from 15). Given that

more DTPs had been funded in this round, it was a strong performance to maintain York's position.

- (b) The Department of Biology had secured funding from BBSRC for two Networks in Industrial Biotechnology and Bioenergy (NIBBs), worth ca. £2m each. Only six awards had been made in total.
- (c) Interviews had been held the preceding week for EPSRC CDTs: IGGI and Fusion (renewals) and a photonics proposal, LIRA, were York-led, and there was an advanced materials bid involving YPI and led by Sheffield Hallam.

#### *Social Sciences*

The University's Round Two bid for ESRC IAA funding had been successful, [redacted – sensitive information]. The arrangements for governance and oversight of this funding and the priorities for spending would be revisited.

#### *Arts & Humanities*

The award of £800k for Professor Rees Jones' project, *The Northern Way: The Archbishops of York and the North of England, 1304-1405*, had been confirmed by the AHRC.

### **18-19/41 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, noting the following:

- (a) **Paragraph redacted – sensitive information.**
- (b) The University's Overseas Research Scholarships for PGRs had been overhauled: 3-4 scholarships would be offered per year, each comprising a full fee waiver and UKRI levels of stipend and RTSG.
- (c) The University was one of ten institutions participating in the pilot of a national supervisor recognition scheme run by UKCGE, and would be putting forward 3 candidates. Support would be provided by the Head of RETT.

### **18-19/42 Report from the Acting Director of Research & Enterprise**

The Committee **received** a report on recent activity in the Research & Enterprise Directorate, (RC.18-19/30) (*FOI Exempt*). Further to the information provided in the report, the Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) Malcolm Stokes had resigned as Head of Business Development; recruitment would take place once the new Director of R&E was in post. Cover would be provided by the BDM team in the interim.
- (b) The majority of R&E staff were now located in the Ron Cooke Hub. The embedding of some RDT colleagues in Faculties would continue. The RGC team was currently split between sites: discussions were in train with Estates towards agreeing a single location for the team for the new year.
- (c) The new Contracts module in Worktribe would support work on non R-coded activity. As a first step towards implementation of the module, RSSH would undertake realignment work in January.

(d) Dr Alice Wakely (RSPO) would be seconded to the two year GCRF funded ethics and integrity role; a backfill post was due to be advertised shortly.

**18-19/43 Industrial Strategy (CONFIDENTIAL AND FOI EXEMPT)**

**18-19/44 Draft Research Theme and Champion Activity Plans (CONFIDENTIAL AND FOI EXEMPT)**

**18-19/45 Priming funding for 2017/18 (CONFIDENTIAL AND FOI EXEMPT)**

**18-19/46 Review of Governance Model 3 research entities**

The Committee **approved** proposals in relation to the review of Governance Model 3 research entities (RC.18-19/34). It **agreed** that ReCCS and DC Labs would need to undergo review, and **noted** that discussion of the timetable and format for rolling reviews would need to take account of the external annual review process already in place for the HRC. It was further **noted** that alternative formats for review would be considered, given that a full-day event with externals was resource-intensive for all involved.

The Committee further **approved** the revised membership of the YESI steering committee, noting that representation from iGDC was now included. It **noted** that the Faculty Dean for the Sciences was likely to continue as the committee's Chair.

**18-19/47 Policy on staff acting as PI on a research grant**

The Committee **considered** a proposed policy position on staff groups permitted to act as PI on research grants (RC.18-19/35). The Research Strategy and Policy Manager spoke to this item. The Committee **noted** the need for clarity in relation to this area and in relation to allocation of PURE accounts, given the implications for staff and output selection as part of the REF submission. It further **noted** that the situation was complex on the ground, but that there were currently some instances in departments which were difficult to defend.

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

- (a) Expectations for T&S staff, including a definition of the distinction between scholarship and research, had been agreed by UEB in January 2016, and were available on the web. The proposed policy statement was to clarify the University's position in relation to staff acting as PI on a research grant, in the context of the principles which had already been agreed and in place for two years.
- (b) The proposed policy position included provision for HoDs to make the case in exceptional circumstances for a member of staff on a T&S contract to act as a Co-I.
- (c) Regarding Grade 6 researchers, there was a tension between the commitments of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and the apparent restriction of opportunities for development. It was further **noted** that it was necessary to have experience as Co-I at least on a grant for promotion to Grade 7.
- (d) A key issue was fairness and parity across departments: it was important to focus on contractual obligations.

- (e) The Committee **agreed** that there was a need to soften the tone of the proposals, to avoid appearing unduly negative or restrictive.

**ACTION: AG**

The Committee **agreed** that details of the University's position regarding expectations for T&S staff should be circulated to all members for information, and members invited to send further comments to the Research Strategy and Policy Manager. Further action in relation to finalising the policy would then be discussed with the Chair.

**ACTION: AG**

The Committee further **noted** the need to clarify whether the proposed policy statement applied to internally as well as externally-awarded research grants, given that the some of the former were funded from external sources.

**ACTION: AG to liaise with RC**

The Committee further **noted** that the issue of REF staff selection would also need to be addressed in relation to staff involved solely in KE activity.

#### **18-19/48 University response to the consultation on draft REF guidance**

The Committee **received** for information the University's finalised response to the REF consultation on draft guidance and panel criteria and working methods (RC.18-19/38). Mr Kirby attended the meeting for this item. The Committee **noted** that the REF panels were due to discuss a final draft of the guidance and panel criteria and working methods shortly.

#### **18-19/49 REF Strategy Group (FOI EXEMPT)**

#### **18-19/50 Research Grants and Contracts Income 2017/18 (FOI EXEMPT)**

#### **18-19/51 Code of Practice on Research Integrity**

The Committee **recommended** to Senate for approval amendments to the University's Code of Practice on Research Integrity (RC.18-19/36). It **agreed** the following additions to the list of areas where further guidance was needed:

- Managing co-authorship with partners from developing countries;
- Co-produced research and conflicts of interest;
- Reproduceability.

The Committee **noted** that the RSPO would begin work on the areas where further guidance was needed once the amendments to the Code had been approved by Senate in January 2019, starting with a user-friendly summary of the Code to support dissemination and engagement. Work would be undertaken in consultation with the academic community and relevant professional support colleagues, and draft guidance brought to the Committee for approval in due course.

## **18-19/52 Policy-focused partnership with Cabinet Office Open Innovation Team**

The Committee **considered** a proposal for entering a policy-focused partnership with the Cabinet Office Open Innovation Team (RC.18-19/37). Professor Festenstein spoke to the item. Further to the information in the paper, the Committee **noted** the following:

- IP & Legal would need to review the terms of the contract;
- **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

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

- (a) It seemed counter-intuitive that the University would be paying the government for the latter to have access to University research. A key factor in the decision would be the added value which would be gained by the University in terms of impact outcomes.
- (b) HEIs who had previously participated in the scheme had found it beneficial. Those institutions which had not renewed their agreements already had their own policy units so were able to invest in this area via alternative routes.
- (c) The partnership would enable researchers to facilitate personal links where these were not already in place, and also provide a bridge for the development of existing relationships.
- (d) The partnership guaranteed a number of benefits to the University e.g. in terms of student engagement and visits, and in practice the Cabinet Office Open Innovation Team had tended to exceed their offer. It was further **noted** that as the partnership's funder, the University would be able to exert influence in terms of its own needs and priorities.

The Committee **agreed** that the partnership was potentially of benefit to departments, and that a sub-group should proceed to look at the opportunities in the round and articulate added value.

**ACTION: MF**

## **18-19/53 Process for aligning research income aspirations and MTP budget - setting**

The Committee **approved** proposals for aligning research income aspirations and MTP budget - setting (RC.18-19/40). It further **noted** that:

- (a) Other than including questions relating to research income aspirations, ADRR 2019 was likely to be a limited exercise, given plans for a mock REF earlier in the year;
- (b) Discussion of the resource required to meet the aspirations over the four year period would form part of the ADRR process. The Committee **noted** that only a few departments would need to make significant changes to their approach to research income, and that these were unlikely to involve major investment in infrastructure.
- (c) It was clarified that discussions with the Deans/Associate Deans on benchmarks and aspirational targets would take place as part of the MTP process during November/December.

## **18-19/54 Applications and awards: year to date September 2018 and previous four year comparisons (FOI EXEMPT)**

**18-19/55 Research grant applications: 5 year trend by funder type (FOI EXEMPT)**

**18-19/56 Research Grants and Contracts realignment**

The Committee **received** for information a report on Research Grants and Contracts realignment (RC.18-19/44). The Acting Director of Research & Enterprise spoke to this item.

The Committee **noted** that presentations had taken place at the FRGs for the Sciences and for the Arts & Humanities; presentation to the Social Sciences FRG was still to be arranged. Further to the report, it was **noted** that revisions were proposed to the job description for current members of the EU team, which, further to the standard RGC job description, had included specific duties relating to the dissemination of funding information and calls, and development of non-academic sections of proposals. Large, strategic grants would continue to be supported by the Research Development Team, including those funded by the EC. The RGC team as a whole would focus on pre- and post- award management, and provide additional support only where they were best placed to do so.

**CATEGORY II BUSINESS**

**18-19/57 Minutes of the GCRF Steering Group**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the GCRF Steering Group held on 31 October 2018 (RC.17-18/45).

**18-19/58 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 31 October 2018 (RC.18-19/46).

**18-19/59 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 25 October 2018 (RC.18-19/47).

**18-19/60 Minutes 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 24 October 2018 (RC.18-19/48).

**18-19/61 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts & Humanities**

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts & Humanities held on 25 October 2018 (RC.18-19/49).

**18-19/62 Next meeting**

The Committee **noted** details of the next meeting: Wednesday 30 January 2019 at 2:15pm in H/G17, Heslington Hall.

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November 2018