

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 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 M Evans
Professor S Smith
Professor J Thijssen
Professor S Carroll
Professor M Goddard
Professor J Steele
Professor P White
Professor E Tyler
Director of Research & Enterprise, Dr D McBeth (M18-19/139-156)
Associate Director of Research & Enterprise, Ms J Gilmartin
Research Strategy and Policy Manager, Ms A Grey

In attendance: Ms Z Clarke (Secretary)
Mr E Kirby (M18-19/159 and 160 only)
Dr R Curwen (M18-19/152 and 153 only)
Dr A Wakely (M18-19/156 only)
Mr T Blake, Research Support Librarian (M18-19/157 only)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor J Buchanan, Professor S Bell, and Professor B Fulton.

18-19/139 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.

18-19/140 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2019

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2019 (RC.18-19/110).

18-19/141 Research Committee action log

The Committee **received** a progress report against its action log for 2018/19 (RC.18-19/111). Further to the information provided, the Committee **noted** the following:

- A reminder that all items addressed at this meeting were to be treated as confidential.
- A paper on initiatives to support Fellowships, noted in M18-19/125, was to be presented to the Committee following a meeting of the University Executive Board in May.
- The PVC-Research had requested an implementation plan from HR concerning the Wellcome Trust Bullying & Harassment Policy. This would be developed in partnership with colleagues from RSPO.

ACTION: HR, ZC

- The registering of clinical trials as requested by the Science and Technology Select Committee was nearing completion. Two of the three trials had been recorded, whilst the third case was not technically a clinical trial and so did not need to be recorded in the same manner. MHRA data needed to be updated to reflect the situation, and the Contracts and Sponsorship Manager had written to the Agency to request this.
- The Committee welcomed the appointment of Emma Montgomery as Research Grants and Contracts Operations Manager.
- Outstanding actions continued to be worked on as appropriate, and would be reported on in due course.

18-19/142 Report from the Chair

The Committee **received** an oral report from the Chair on the upcoming visit from the Wellcome Trust in July, led by the Rt. Hon. The Baroness Manningham-Buller. The visit would focus on the strategic vision of the University and the interdisciplinary expertise at York. As Wellcome was now the second largest funder globally, the visit was of high importance.

18-19/143 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)

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

Sciences

There was a high degree of activity surrounding the recent Mock REF, primarily the distribution and discussion of feedback for departments. This had been constructive thus far.

Social Sciences

- Mock REF feedback was being discussed with departments across the Faculty.
- The Faculty had been successful in the recent round of ESRC Fellowship applications, and had performed better than in 2018/19. Three of the seven available positions had been awarded to York, out of a possible six other universities. These applications had been supported by the Research Development Team, and the AD(R) expressed appreciation for this assistance.

- The Policy Institute was currently recruiting for a manager, with the deadline for applications being 30 June 2019.
- The Open Innovation Team agreement had been signed by the University in 10 Downing Street on 19 June 2019, and the project was officially confirmed.

Arts & Humanities

- Feedback from the Mock REF was being distributed and discussed with departments.
- The recent Festival of Ideas had been a success, in particular the Fringe Family Fun Afternoon. The afternoon featured educational activities related to the research conducted by postgraduates across the HRC.
- A number of high-value grants had been awarded across the Faculty, including from the AHRC for a project on Pantheons, led by Professor Edwards from History of Art, and a Leverhulme Fellowship for the Department of English for Dr Zeldenrust, "Continental connections: European bestselling romances in Britain (c.1400-1600).
- A University of Leeds-led consortium, which includes the University of York, has secured funding for a national Centre for Cultural Value. Professor Higson (TFTI) would take on a Co-Investigator role for the Centre
- A UKRI Future Leaders Fellow (FLF) had joined History, and the Committee welcomed this opportunity for the Department. The Fellow, Dr Alberti, was currently working on a project on the emotional and cultural history of face transplants.

18-19/144 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) A paper on PGRO recruitment had gone to International Committee, which had identified key areas for further work. Further progress had been made in a number of areas highlighted at the May URC (M18-19/124), particularly regarding integrated PhDs and pre-application support.
- (b) With reference to pre-application support, the possibility that time and work may be invested in student projects that ultimately go to other institutions was raised, and in response it was noted that the focus for the policy was continuing to increase recruitment of overseas students, who could be supported to develop proposals.
- (c) A Code of Conduct on relationships between research students and supervisors was approved by the YGRS Board and would be sent to Senate. The Code featured a total ban on sexual relationships, which the Wellcome Trust described as clear and empowering, aligning with the Trust's own policy on the same issue. It was acknowledged that there could be potential difficulties in enforcing the ban, however it was noted that a similar policy existed regarding examiner-student relationships, and the same policy would be applied regarding supervisors. The policy had been circulated among Equality and Diversity and Student Health and Wellbeing staff – the next step was to ensure that all students and staff were informed following Senate approval.
- (d) Recent ethical misconduct cases had highlighted the need for a change in the administration of research student applications, specifically in the area of ethical oversight. Currently projects were accepted prior to review, meaning serious ethical

issues were only discovered after the student had joined the University. This was to be considered by the incoming Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee (AECC).

ACTION: ZC to add to list of areas for new AECC

- (e) The EPSRC DTP grant is awarded every two years and is worth £2.6m. The award is conditional on a Statement of Intent being approved and in order to respond to previous feedback, and as such strong oversight is needed.

18-19/145 Report from the Director of Research & Enterprise

The Committee **received** a report on recent activity in the Research & Enterprise Directorate (RC.18-19/112) (*FOI Exempt*), **noting** the following in particular:

(a) **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

(b) The University of York Enterprise Fellowship Programme had won the Internal Knowledge Exchange Initiative of the Year award at the 2019 PraxisAuril conference. The success of the initiative spoke to the value of York's approach to Fellowships, however the Committee noted the continued need to support the needs of academic more broadly alongside this.

(c) The Industrial Strategy webpages, currently under development, must be sure to be inclusive of all going on across the University and the sector. The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund should be looked at in more detail and oversight ensured.

ACTION: DMc

18-19/146 Research grant applications and awards: Year to date April 2019 and previous 4 year comparisons

The Committee **considered** a report on research grant applications and awards: year to date April 2019 and previous four year comparisons (RC.18-19/113) (*FOI Exempt*).

The following points were **noted**:

(a) Due to the timing of URC meetings, the report presented this time only differed by one month to that presented in May. As a result the data did not differ hugely from what had been seen previously, however the Committee recognised the value of consistent oversight.

(b) The 2017/18 year saw a number of high-value applications, and it was noted that the comparison between the two years involved comparing 'scales of large', which was a strong position for the University. The Committee noted that the position of the University this year versus last year in terms of applications data was narrowing.

(c) **Paragraph redacted – SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

18-19/147 Quarter 3 research income (FOI EXEMPT)

18-19/148 EU grants in the light of Brexit (CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT)

18-19/149 HESA income data (FOI EXEMPT)

18-19/150 PGR scholarships spend (CONFIDENTIAL & FOI EXEMPT)

18-19/151 2015-2020 Research Strategy review

The Committee **considered** the updated implementation plan for the 2015-2020 University research strategy (RC.18-19/118), noting that, with the addition of the initiative described in the Fellowships paper (RC.18-19/119) later in the meeting, each goal set in the strategy had now been completed. The document was welcomed and the Committee expressed gratitude for colleagues in their work in delivering the strategy at the operational level.

Colleagues from RSPO would begin to consider the next research strategy following the arrival of the new Vice-Chancellor in September, and the work done thus far was a strong basis upon which to build a framework. KPI reporting would also be presented to the Committee at the next URC meeting in October.

ACTION: RSPO

18-19/152 Initiatives to support Fellowships

18-19/153 Oral update on the SafePod Network

The Committee **received** an oral report on an application to the SafePod Network scheme, administered by the ESRC. Dr Rachel Curwen spoke to this item. If successful, the SafePod would be located in the library and would allow for the secure access of highly-sensitive data. The Pod would be advertised and available to other institutions. The future potential of the Network to negotiate and enable access to more data sets was of particular value.

The application was led by Masud Khokhar (the Director for Library and Archives), assisted by Dr Rachel Curwen, Professor Karen Bloor (Research Champion for Health and Wellbeing), and Roxanne Connelly (Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology), who has previous experience with the SafePod Network from her time at the University of Warwick.

18-19/154 Restructure of ethics governance

The Committee **considered** a proposal for the restructure of ethics governance at the University (RC.18-19/120). In the course of discussion, the following points were **noted**:

- (a) The governance structure highlighted in the proposal had been agreed by Council, and might need further review before the process became operational. The relationship between the Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee (AECC) and subject-level committees would need articulating more clearly, requiring University policy to be changed to reflect the new structure.
- (b) The AECC was intended as a referral point for complex issues or cases faced by subject-level committees; there had been a number of cases recently where such a committee would have been valuable. Similarly, the restructuring would incorporate compliance issues such as Nagoya, improving oversight across the institution. Funding had been included through the MTP for an administrative post supporting the AECC.

- (c) It was recognised that the work of the AECC would overlap with that of the University Governance Ethics Committee (UGEC), which would oversee research-related work, and that both committees would need to work closely together.
- (d) Student representatives would be expected to leave for sensitive or confidential items. This would be achieved with the use of 'starred' and 'non-starred' items.

18-19/155 Annual Statement on Research Integrity for 2018/19

The Committee **approved** the Annual Statement on Research Integrity (RC.18-19/121). The statement would be considered by Senate in July, before submission to Council.

18-19/156 Review of operational structures in support of strategic research priorities

The Committee **considered** a report summarising findings and recommendations from the recent Themes Governance review (RC.18-19/122). Dr Alice Wakely spoke to this item. In addition to the information in the paper, the Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) A draft of the report had been considered by FRGs in May: comments were summarised in Appendix Two of the paper.
- (b) Following discussion, the Committee approved the report and its recommendations, subject to the following modifications:
 - i. Recommendation 5, regarding the need to avoid a rigid demarcation of responsibilities in the interest of creativity and flexibility, to be reworded in a more positive manner.
 - ii. Recommendation 11 to be refocused on ensuring that existing mechanisms are fit for purpose.
 - iii. Recommendation 13, regarding consideration of whether it would be helpful to articulate strategy at Faculty level, to be removed, given that FRG discussions had indicated little support for Faculty-level research strategies.

ACTION: AW

- (c) The Committee noted that a substantial proportion of the Recommendations related to the need for improved communication, including Recommendation 6, regarding the continuation of regular meetings between the PVC-R, AD(R)s, and Champions. The Chair would take the lead on arranging these meetings for the next academic year.

ACTION: Chair

- (d) Following the approval of the report, the RSPO would develop an action plan in order to implement proposals in consultation with the relevant colleagues, for sign-off by the AD(R)s. Progress reports would be provided for URC in due course.

ACTION: ZC

The Committee **approved** the recommendations but requested sight of the final paper prior to URC sign-off.

18-19/157 Update on Plan S

The Committee **received** an update on Plan S (RC.18-19/124). The Research Support Librarian attended for this item. Further to the information presented in the paper, the Committee **noted** the following points in particular:

- (a) The timeline for Plan S had been relaxed slightly, with the deadline for implementation extended by one year to 01/01/2021. The conditions of Plan S would apply to publications submitted after 01/01/2021. Guidance on journal-specific policies would be made available in due course, together with further estimates of costings.

ACTION: TB

- (b) The issue of CC BY-ND licenses was raised, with the Committee noting that the requirement to go through the application process for each publication was time-consuming and burdensome. This will be fed back to UKRI, and the Library will look into potential solutions for this issue.

ACTION: TB

- (c) It was currently unclear how tightly UKRI will comply with Plan S, and the Committee acknowledged that these plans were still subject to alteration. The Committee noted the existence of Plan U, a proposal aiming to provide free access to publication preprints in a similar manner to that of the Wellcome Trust. Implementation of this proposal would apply differently between disciplines.

ACTION: Library to look into further

18-19/158 Guidance on research performance expectations

The Committee **considered** updates to University guidance on research performance expectations (RC.18-19/123). The following points were noted:

- (a) The document had been presented to all three FRGs and edited accordingly. Major changes since the document was last presented to URC were:
- increased clarity with regards to career stages;
 - the inclusion of monographs;
 - replacement of the word 'triggers' with the 'framework for the escalation of issues';
 - emphasis that outputs were not assessed on journal impact factor or place of publication.
- (b) The Committee requested some changes to the wording of the guidance:
- i. Wording surrounding the co-analysis of research *results* was to be changed to research *projects*, in light of research integrity considerations.

ACTION: AG

- ii. The word 'triggers' in paragraph 23 was also to be reworded in line with the 'framework for the escalation of issues' language specified above.

ACTION: AG

- iii. The Committee requested that the wording of requirement for staff to seek research funding be changed to reflect this was necessary '*where appropriate*'.

ACTION: AG

- iv. The wording of the policy as a whole was to be checked with Duncan Jackson, Head of Academic Practice, to ensure alignment with the complementary guidance on teaching performance expectations.

ACTION: AG, DJ

- (c) The action required for research students was currently focused on recruitment. Further consideration was needed as to the specifics of this action.

ACTION: AG

- (d) It was noted that the need for researchers to meet the requirements of the Open Access policy was potentially problematic due to the difficulty in enforcing and supporting the specification. Reporting on this aspect had to be improved.

ACTION: AG to work with the library

The Committee **approved** the policy with appropriate changes, and the revised policy would be taken forward to Senate once edits had been made and approved.

ACTION: AG to edit, MG, DB, JT, CB, and DJ to approve

18-19/159 Oral report on the meeting of the REF Strategy Group held on 6 June 2019

The Committee **received** for information an oral report on the REF Strategy Group meetings held on 31/05/2019 and 06/06/2019. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) The wording on the selection of outputs had been clarified and further amendments made before the Code of Practice was submitted on 07/06/2019. Feedback on the submitted Code of Practice was expected on 16/08/2019.
- (b) Updated draft guidance on institutional environment templates had been released, with final guidance due to be released in the autumn.
- (c) REF Modeller sessions had been held for staff and had been well-attended. Additional developments are planned, drawing on the feedback from these sessions.

18-19/160 Update on the Mock REF (STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND FOI EXEMPT)

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

18-19/161 Minutes of the GCRF Steering Group meeting held on 16 May 2019.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the GCRF Steering Group held on 16 May 2019 (RC.17-18/127).

18-19/162 Minutes of the Research Communications Strategy Group meeting held on 26 April 2019.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Research Communications Strategy Group held on 26 April 2019 (RC.18-19/128).

18-19/163 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences meeting held on 21 May 2019.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 21 May 2019 (RC.18-19/129).

18-19/164 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts and Humanities meeting held on 21 May 2019.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts and Humanities held on 21 May 2019 (RC.18-19/130).

18-19/165 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences meeting held on 28 May 2019.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 28 May 2019 (RC.18-19/131).

18-19/166 Minutes of the RETT Steering Group meeting held on 29 May 2019.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 29 May 2019 (RC.18-19/132).

18-19/169 Meetings for 2019/2020

The Committee **noted** details of meetings for 2019/2020 as follows:

- Wednesday 9 October at 2pm in H/G17, Heslington Hall;
- Friday 6 December at 2pm in H/G17, Heslington Hall;
- Wednesday 29 January at 2pm in H/G17, Heslington Hall;
- Wednesday 11 March at 9.30am in H/G17, Heslington Hall;
- Wednesday 29 April at 9.30am in H/G17, Heslington Hall;
- Wednesday 17 June at 2pm in H/G17, Heslington Hall.

zc/zc

June 2019