

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Matters for note by Senate arising from the meeting of Research Committee on 4 May 2022

1. Preparations for the release of REF results

- (a) The Committee received an oral report on the proposed plans for the release and analysis of the REF 2021 results. It was noted that results would be published online on Thursday 12 May, alongside those prepared by Times Higher and Research Professional. The PIP team was working with the communications team to produce messaging to accompany the release of results. Work was underway to enable departments to understand results compared with other institutions, to enable external benchmarking.
- (b) Following the release of results, consideration of next steps and post-REF activity would take place.
Secretary's Note: It was clarified following the meeting that the ADRR would not take place for 2021/22, and instead a post-REF reflective exercise would be developed.

2. Update from CITY College

The Committee noted an update from CITY College, Thessaloniki. The Vice-President for Research and Innovation at CITY College attended to speak to this item. The following points were noted:

- (a) Thanks were extended to the University for the valuable collaboration work undertaken, including the launch of the joint PhD programme and associated fee-waive scholarships. CITY College would hold its annual PGR conference at the end of June, alongside the University of York, and the Department of Politics would collaborate with CITY College on their Migration Summer School. A joint paper from researchers in Management from both institutions had recently been published.
- (b) A number of research project successes were reported, including two in receipt of Horizon 2020 funding and one receiving Horizon Europe funding. CITY College was currently preparing new Horizon submissions in line with the research strengths of the institution, for example gender equality, sustainability and Responsible Research and Innovation.
- (c) CITY College was in the process of developing its research strategy for 2022-2027; focus areas would be (i) sustainability, (ii) digital inclusivity and (iii) wellbeing and inclusion.

3. Update on Sustainability proposals for the University

Sustainability work covered a range of activity at the University, and work had taken place to de-centralise the processes involved and ensure greater accountability. A Steering Group had been established, reporting to UEB, which had oversight of a range of sub-groups. Key areas of sustainability activity (namely Environmental Sustainability Academy York, YESI, SEI-Y and DTEF) were noted. A number of smaller action areas were also included, including communications, supply chain management and wellbeing. It was recognised that the demarcation between activity under the listed areas was not fully laid out, and that such delineation would take time to establish. More specific proposals would be presented to the Committee in due course.

4. Payments made to research participants and contributors from August 2021-March 2022

The Committee noted the content of a summary report on payments made to participants and contributors from August 2021-March 2022. Further to the information included in the paper, the following was discussed:

- (a) The report was presented in line with the requirements of the Policy on the Payment of Individuals for Involvement with or Contribution to Research, and would be calibrated in response to Committee feedback and other requirements. It was agreed that the level of detail currently included was appropriate to the needs of the Committee. The ownership of the report would be considered; whereas the current paper had been presented by PIP, Finance was well-placed to conduct such an analysis.
- (b) It was suggested that a further breakdown of payments – for example, by type of participation – would be useful if possible, however it was recognised that such information was not available on Aggresso at this stage. The provision of further information as to the breakdown of payments between PPI and Involvement@York was possible and would be appreciated. This would be considered going forwards.

5. Other Business

- (c) The Spring call for internally-distributed funding applications had launched. The available funding cut across disciplines at the University. A paper was under development for consideration by the University in June.
- (d) The University had been ranked in the Top 10 in the world for progress meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the Times Higher. This highlighted and reaffirmed the University commitment to public good, and work would continue in this space to build upon strengths and improve across the area.
- (e) Updates were received from the York Graduate Research School (YGRS). The official launch of the York Centre for Equity Doctoral Education (YCEDE) was scheduled for 26 May. A number of key individuals from external and internal stakeholders would be present. Work continued with the Emerging Talent initiative, with a particular focus on recruitment and admissions. This was aligned with HR and associated work on recruitment and retention values. A paper on this would be presented to URC in the near future. The institutional response to the UKRI Consultation on the New Deal for PGRs would be finalised shortly. Finally, the Graduate School was working to strengthen the training and support available for PGR supervisors, including a consideration of how supervisors can be best rewarded for their efforts. Although some rewards took place at department- or faculty-level (such as fellowship schemes, poster competitions and awards), it was acknowledged that some centrally-coordinated provision would be appreciated. This would be further considered in the context of wider work underway concerning rewards and recognition.
- (f) A number of grant successes were reported. The recent success of CHE and CRD in achieving grants was acknowledged, as well as excellence shown by individual team members. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. In Arts & Humanities, the University had been awarded an ESRC Consolidator Grant of €2M for research into rats from pre-history to the 19th-century. The HRC had received funding from the Research Culture project taking place across the University. This would focus on three main areas: (i) training future researchers, (ii) facilitating serendipitous meetings and events, and (iii) working with the public and external partners.
- (g) Further to the above, Professor Simon Duckett (Department of Chemistry) had been successful in winning an ERC Advanced Grant ('Magnify').. The Institute for Safe Autonomy (ISA) had been awarded an RPIF bid to support work on self-sufficient net energy, including the construction of a solar farm on campus. A number of Royal Society Industry Fellowships had also been awarded. Dr David Kent (Biology) had been named as the recipient of the International Society for Experimental Haematology Janet Rowley award.

- (h) It was reported that final approval would be sought from Planning Committee and UEB regarding proposals concerning industry income, including changes to policies and processes and recommendations for investment. It was clarified that PGR activity was not specifically included in the paper, but was within the scope of changes and recommendations identified.
- (i) A review of University partnerships was underway, and discussion was ongoing alongside this regarding a new system for managing partnerships, however the scope of any such system needed further consideration. Further to this, the Directorate had brought in an external consultancy firm to conduct a review in order to ensure alignment with the external research policy environment. [REDACTED]
- (j) (d) Work continued on the PSD Workstream, with a broad implementation goal of summer 2023 in place. The importance of receiving feedback from all involved was noted. It was clarified that the aim of the reorganisation was to resolve points of fragmentation within the system and ensure processes to support research were as consistent as possible. Such work would strengthen research at York; it was suggested that communications around the PSD changes should emphasise this outcome.
- (k) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] With regards to Horizon Europe, it was clarified that further information on how to submit an EC award to the UK underwrite would not be available until proximity to the EC grant agreement deadline triggered the release of guidance. The importance of robust communication on this front was recognised, and it was requested that questions be directed to RGO.
- (l) Conversation continued regarding the sharing of data from Tableau. It was reported that conversations in this space had been positive thus far, and that URC reporting was in alignment with Finance. More information would be shared as relevant, most likely over summer.

PROFESSOR MATTHIAS RUTH
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MS ZOE CLARKE