

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021

Present: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor M Ruth (Chair)
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Sciences,
Professor Y Birks
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts & Humanities,
Professor R Ogden
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences,
Professor S Thompson
Dean, York Graduate Research School, Professor K Arnold
Professor K Bloor
Professor L Carpenter
Professor S Carroll
Professor M Fairclough
Professor A Manca
Professor J Richards
Professor S Smith
Professor J Thijssen
Dr Merran Toerien
Acting Director of Research & Enterprise, Ms J Gilmartin
Research Strategy and Policy Manager, Ms A Grey

In attendance: Ms Z Clarke (Secretary)
Ms C Walsh
Ms A McManus
Mr E Kirby (M21-22/16 & 17 only)
Dr L Shilton (M21-22/11 only)
Mr P Wiles (M21-22/12 only)
Ms S Thompson (M21-22/13 only)
Ms A Selvaratnam (M21-22/14 only)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor K Trehan, Professor K Bloor, and Professor P Ketikidis.

21-22/01 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. It was **noted** that members were required to complete the central process for the declaration of interests by 31 October 2021.

21-22/02 Terms of Reference

The Committee **approved** the Terms of Reference for the Committee, and at the same time **approved** revisions to the process for the management of conflicts of interest (RC.21-22/01). It was **noted** that the departmental affiliation of Professor Stephen Smith needed to be amended to 'Electronic Engineering'.

21-22/03 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on **23 June 2021** (RC.21-22/02).

21-22/04 Research Committee action log

The Committee **received** a progress report against its action log for 2021/22 (RC.21-22/03). Further to the information provided, the Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) M.20-21/122: Following discussion at the previous URC meeting, the paper on the establishment of the Interdisciplinary Institute for Mental Health Social Research at York had been revised and circulated to members for comments. The paper would be presented later in the agenda (RC.21-22/06), with approval for the establishment of the Institute sought.
- (b) M.20-21/13: Impact reporting had been combined with the annual report on KPI data for ease and alignment in analysis.
- (c) RC.20-21/110: A paper on payments for individuals involved in research had been approved by UEB, and was included on the agenda for consideration (RC.21-22/19).
- (d) M.20-21/111: Material concerning the Knowledge Exchange Concordat would continue to be presented to URC, in order to keep the Committee informed appropriately.
- (e) M.20-21/107: Conversations were ongoing on the next steps for research entity reviews, and it was **noted** that a regular review schedule would be beneficial to the work of the Committee. URC would receive updates as appropriate.
- (f) M.20-21/116: It was **clarified** that, when discussing promotions criteria and interdisciplinarity, research and teaching needed to be considered separately. Conversations with the Provost were ongoing.

21-22/05 Report from the Chair

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

- The UK Committee on Research Integrity (UK CORI) had been established, and would shortly commence an open recruitment for the chair and members. Colleagues interested in being involved with the Committee could contact the Chair for details, or visit the UKRI website. Consultation on priorities for UK CORI would take place in the autumn.
- The University had recently been shortlisted for University of the Year in The Times & The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022, as well as being shortlisted for University

of the Year by Times Higher Education. This recognition demonstrated the resilience and hard work of the University community, and the ability of colleagues to move forwards in difficult times.

- The Remote Working Policy had come into place on 27 September, and colleagues were **reminded** that this remained an evolving area.
- Consideration of the work of Research Champions had identified the emerging theme of Place, which would be taken forward by a working group (led by N8). The focus would be on levelling, and the work of this theme would intersect with several others across the institution, such as environment and sustainability, health, and poverty.

21-22/06 Oral 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, in which the following points were **noted**:

- The start of term had been a success thus far, and the Graduate School had welcomed 480 new PGR students. Thanks were extended to RETT and the PGR administrative team for their work in developing online and in-person induction activities.
- Progress continued with the YGRS Strategy, the timing of which would be aligned with work on the wider University Strategy. YGRS had recruited a new member of staff whose remit would focus on implementing changes to PGR recruitment in line with the YGRS Strategy.
- Further to the above, the Graduate School had developed a new scholarship scheme focused on BAME candidates, which would include bespoke support during the application and induction stages. It was **clarified** that this scholarship scheme would be available across the whole institution, and not restricted to any particular discipline.
- At a recent Vitae conference, the UKRI Director (Talent and Skills) had announced a consultation on a 'New Deal' for PGRs (as noted in the Government's Research and Development People and Culture Strategy). This would involve consideration of the employment status of PGR students, namely the appropriateness of registering PGRs as staff, as well as looking at funding, recruitment and selection policies. The Committee **recognised** that this would be a long-term piece of work, but that it was important to be aware of changes on the horizon. The immediate planning implications this were **noted**, as was the news that that a number of research councils also intended to conduct a consultation on the New Deal for PGRs, which had the effect of delaying some funding announcements. Good communication was vital on this front.

21-22/07 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)

The Committee **received** oral reports from the Associate Deans for Research, as follows:

Sciences

- (a) Faculty strategy meetings would soon take place. These would be an opportunity to pull out emerging research ideas and look to the future, and would include YESI, YBRI and

ISA. One of the themes which will run throughout the year will be the creation of the School of Physics, Engineering and Technology.

- (b) The Faculty Impact Manager had held two workshops so far on the topic of managing research impact in the faculty, which had led to the development of exciting research ideas and gave colleagues the skills to manage impact proactively.

Arts & Humanities

- (a) Colleagues within the faculty looked forward to the upcoming strategy meetings. Activities such as awaydays and conferences were starting up again. PGR students had returned to the HRC; for the autumn term, the space is divided into work zones like those in the Library, with more hot desks available.
- (b) Work continued on a new Impact Accelerator Account, and the Faculty thanked the HRC team for their work. An application would shortly be submitted to the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes for a project entitled 'Hope: A Human Medicine in Times of Uncertainty', which would bring together colleagues within the University and across the world (including Texas and Ghana) to set up a Global Humanities Institute and a two-week summer school. The Place and Community Project would have a slot at the upcoming Impact Fortnight, taking place in November.
- (c) The questions surrounding the management of Open Access requirements for long-form publications such as monographs remained. It had been helpful to have the Head of Content and Open Access attend the recent Faculty Research Group.

Social Sciences

- (a) The Faculty was also enjoying the chance to look ahead and set aspirational goals. An opening event had been held for the new Sociology building, and the benefits of a similar event for the new schools, currently in development as part of the University Strategy, were **noted**.
- (b) The outcome of the University application for the ERSC Centre for Policing and Vulnerability was due soon. It was **noted** in particular that a specific question had been asked regarding the sustainability of the centre and the University, indicating that this was an area of rising importance to funders.
- (c) A new model of bookable space had been implemented in ReCSS. The Deputy Director of ReCSS was reviewing PGR support.

21-22/08 Report from the Director of Research & Enterprise (Fol Exempt)

The Committee **received** a report on recent activity in the Research & Enterprise Directorate (RC.21-22/04) (*Fol Exempt*), **noting** the following in particular:

- (a) A review of activity within the Directorate had made clear the need for a Customer Relationship Management tool.
- (b) The name of the Directorate would change to Research Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE). The Research Strategy and Policy Office would become Policy, Integrity and Performance (PIP). The Directorate was implementing a flexible working model, with

teams assigned specific days to use office space. All members of the Directorate were now based in the Ron Cooke Hub.

- (c) The Research Payments Policy had been approved by UEB and had now moved into the implementation stage. It was **noted** that departments would maintain records of payments, with an annual report being presented to URC. Clear documentation confirming the voluntary nature of engagement was a necessity. It was **clarified** that individuals may be paid more than the threshold amounts noted in the paper, but that this would have implications for the nature of involvement (legal status change from volunteer to voluntary worker, or worker) and surrounding legal or financial requirements.
- (d) Two posts within the contracts team had been filled. The team was developing innovative ways to improve the efficiency of the contracts process and empower departments, including producing templates. Such work, when combined with the additional resource, would assist in tackling the backlog in RKEC and result in an improved service going forwards.
- (e) Limited resources had slowed the Research Information Reporting project somewhat, however progress was still being made. The group was in the process of securing a Chair for a working group. A development plan for PURE was in train.

21-22/09 University Strategy for 2030 and URC Priorities (*Confidential & FoI Exempt*)

The Committee **considered** an update on the University Strategy for 2030 and URC Priorities (*Confidential & FoI Exempt*). The following points were **noted**:

- (a) The Research Strategy and identification of URC priorities would depend upon the details determined in the University Strategic Plan. The upcoming Council away-day on 8 October would focus on developing transformational initiatives, and these initiatives would demonstrate the York vision of a University for public good. URC would be involved in the shaping of the plan and communication of details across the University (with communication to audiences also helped by an outside agency). The importance of articulating this vision in concrete ways was **recognised**.
- (b) A key aspect of developing the strategy was to co-ordinate existing structures and dynamics within the University – such as in aligning research and teaching – and ensuring synergy across these. It would be valuable to revisit what was already in place and identify areas of improvement, with the aim of greater connectedness across the institution. Departments held information on quality scores for research and impact, which would be useful.
- (c) Further to the above, the strategy was an opportunity to consider the future direction of the institution, and identify strengths upon which York could build.
- (d) It was **clarified** that interdisciplinary work could also take place within departments.

21-22/10 Report against KPIs for 2020/21

The Committee **considered** a report against KPIs for 2020/21 (RC.21-22/05), and **noted** the following:

- (a) Previously KPIs and impact indicators had been presented in separate reports. Thanks were extended to the University Impact Manager and the Research Policy Officer for Information for their help in compiling the report. Issues with accessing the required data were **noted**. EDI figures were included for the first time.
- (b) *[Redacted due to FoI exemption]*
- (c) *[Redacted due to FoI exemption]*
- (d) *[Redacted due to FoI exemption]*

21-22/11 Establishment of the Interdisciplinary Institute for Mental Health Research at York (Confidential & FoI Exempt)

The Committee **considered** a report on the establishment of the Interdisciplinary Institute for Mental Health Research at York (IIMHSRY) (RC.21-22/06). The Research Development Manager for Applied Health and Social Care attended to speak to this item.

The paper had been circulated to members over the summer, and comments had been tracked and incorporated as necessary. The paper had included the provision that the institute would review progress and assess the potential role of a home Faculty in two years time. The Committee **endorsed** the establishment of the IIMHRY.

ACTION: Research Development Manager Applied Health and Social Care

21-22/12 Update on Due Diligence Procedures

The Committee **considered** an update on due diligence procedures at the University and **endorsed** the proposed actions (RC.21-22/07). The Research Integrity and Compliance Manager attended to speak to this item. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) The decision had been made to not label the new process as 'light touch', as this wording had implied a degree of choice over whether to engage as required.
- (b) The work was driven by both external and internal drivers, and the Committee **recognised** the importance of strengthening processes so that the University could demonstrate alignment with good practice and relevant requirements.
- (c) It was **clarified** that the responsibility for completion of the due diligence process lay with the PI, but that the job could be delegated. Some separation of work was needed in order to avoid conflicts of interest.
- (d) Processes for due diligence needed to be proportionate and mindful of the capabilities of partner organisations. The inclusion of exemption criteria was useful in this respect.
- (e) Such processes and requirements covered PGR students and PhD projects, however it was **clarified** that the current work was focused on R-coded grants. Other areas which needed to fit in with due diligence would be addressed in due course.

The Committee **approved** the proposed actions.

21-22/13 Update from the Open Research Strategy Group

The Committee **discussed** the annual update from the Open Research Strategy Group and **approved** the direction of travel (RC.21-22/08). The Head of Content and Open Research attended to speak to this item. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) Significant progress had taken place in terms of developing community support and engagement over 2020/21. Further support had also been put in place in terms of infrastructure. The need for a central Open Access fund remained, as did further work on open data, in light of funder expectations for research outputs.
- (b) The funding of open access monographs remained a concern. It was important to keep an eye on PGR funding in the context of Open Access requirements.
- (c) The University preference for disciplinary repositories (rather than institutional) was in step with requirements and best practice across the sector. A further proposal regarding the institutional repository would be developed in due course.

ACTION: Head of Content and Open Research to bring to the Committee as relevant

- (d) Further information on the ongoing developments with Elsevier would come soon. The UKRI Open Access policy, released over the summer, was light on operational details, however further information would be presented to the Committee in due course.

21-22/14 Update on the Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC)

The Committee **discussed** an update on the Knowledge Exchange Concordat (RC.21-22/09). The Head of Enterprise Services attended to speak to this item. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) Six main areas had been identified in order to deliver on the improvement plans, and York would be guided by these rather than by the KEC principles. Each group would be led by a member of professional services with the aim of delivering their objectives by the end of 2024. It was **noted** that some actions were logical preconditions to others, and that the sequencing of actions should be considered. It would be beneficial to work alongside Faculty Impact Managers.
- (b) Activity taking place across the institution would help to meet KEC goals, and the Committee **emphasised** the importance of aligning what was already in place. A number of actions for the KEC overlapped with areas raised as part of the business of other University committees.

The Committee **approved** the proposed direction of travel and implementation plans, with the recognition that this was an evolving area. Further updates and discussion should be brought to the Committee as necessary.

21-22/15 Expenses involved in the attendance of conferences and memberships of learned societies

The Committee **considered** a paper on the expenses involved in the attendance of conferences and memberships of learned societies (RC.21-22/10). The following points were **noted**:

- (a) This had been a longstanding issue, and the opportunity for nuanced discussion was **welcomed**. Conference attendance was included in promotions criteria, which had the potential to cause difficulties, particularly for PGR students and ECRs. The issue of paying for attendance fees through PGR grants was also **noted**. Further, the current requirement for reimbursement that societies had to be on HMRC List 3 resulted in government influence over which groups academics could be involved with. Several key societies were also not on HMRC List 3.
- (b) It was **recognised** that this issue would require leadership from Finance. Similar rules were in place for professional societies such as the Association of Research Managers and Administrators. Paying such fees would be a large financial commitment from the University, and the tax implications would need consideration.
- (c) The Committee emphasised the need for good communication on this front, and it was important that the full implications of any changes were assessed in depth.

The Committee **approved** the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to look further into this issue. The group should involve colleagues from legal and finance, as well as including academic interests. Further insight could be sought from the Russell Group.

ACTION: ZC to follow up

21-22/16 Review of the REF and lessons learnt from the process (*Confidential & FoI Exempt*)

[Item redacted due to confidentiality and FoI exemption]

21-22/17 REF Equality Impact Assessment (*Confidential & FoI Exempt*)

The Committee **considered** without comment the final version of the REF Equality Impact Assessment (RC.21-22/12) (*Confidential & FoI Exempt*).

21-22/18 Payment of Research Participants (*Confidential & FoI Exempt*)

The Committee **received** a paper on the payment of research participants (RC.21-22/13) (*Confidential & FoI Exempt*). It was **clarified** that references to research participants being subjects of clinical trials had been included in error, and would be corrected.

With the exception of the above, it was **agreed** that the Research & Enterprise report (presented earlier in the agenda, RC.21-22/04) had covered this area adequately, and as such no further discussion took place.

21-22/19 Research Grant Applications and Awards: Year to Date August 2021 and Previous 4 Year Comparisons (*FoI Exempt*)

The Committee **received for information** a report on research grant applications and awards: year to date August 2021 and previous 4 Year comparisons (RC.21-22/14) (*Confidential & FoI Exempt*). The RGO Manager and the Research Policy Officer for Information Management attended to speak to this item. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) It was **clarified** that the paper covered data to 31st July, not August.

(b) *[Redacted due to FoI exemption]*

(c) The data was available on Tableau for members to view further as necessary. Since August, reporting on GR-codes was available.

(d) Data was pulled from both Worktribe and Aggresso to ensure accuracy, and an increased use of Aggresso was **welcomed** due to the lower margin of error. It was hoped that information on income could soon be brought in directly from Aggresso, which would help in further interrogating data. Work was ongoing to enable visualisation of contributing departments on a grant, rather than just the lead.

21-22/20 HESA Income Data (Confidential & FoI Exempt)

The Committee **considered** a report on HESA data for 2021/22 (RC.21-22/15) (*Confidential & FoI Exempt*). The following points were noted:

(a) The release of HESA data nationally had been delayed, and had been brought to the Committee at the earliest possible point. Reporting was available at Faculty-level too, as well as via Tableau. This data was the first available showing the impact of Covid across the sector, in terms of research income.

(b) *[Redacted due to FoI exemption]*

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

20-21/21 Proposed changes to the online Research Integrity Tutorial.

The Committee **received** for information the proposed changes to the online Research Integrity Tutorial (RC.21-22/16).

20-21/22 Minutes of the meeting of the REF Strategy Group held on 12 July 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the REF Strategy Group held on 12 July 2021 (RC.21-22/17).

20-21/23 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 7 June 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 7 June 2021 (RC.21-22/18).

20-21/24 Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 2 August 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 2 August 2021 (RC.21-22/19).

20-21/25 Minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 2 February 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 2 February 2021 (RC.18-19/20).

20-21/26 Next meeting

The Committee noted details of the next meeting: Thursday 25 November at 2.00pm, held via Zoom.

zc/zc

December 2019