

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022

Present: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor M Ruth (Chair)
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences, Professor S Thompson
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts & Humanities,
Professor R Ogden
Dean, York Graduate Research School, Professor K Arnold
Professor K Bloor
Professor L Carpenter
Professor S Carroll
Professor A Manca
Professor J Richards
Professor S Smith
Professor J Thijssen
Dr M Toerien
Director of Research, Innovation & Knowledge Exchange, Dr A Jackson
(until M.21-22/78)
Associate Director of Research, Innovation & Knowledge Exchange, Ms J
Gilmartin
Research Strategy and Policy Manager, Mr A Taylor

In attendance: Ms Z Clarke (Secretary)
Ms J Mayne (PIP)
Professor K Atkin (M.21-22/77 only)
Mr Michael Barber (M21-22/77 only)
Ms R Barson (M.21-22/80 only)
Ms S Perry (M.21-22/80 only)
Ms A McManus (M.21-22/80 and 84 only)
Ms K Lingstadt (M.21-22/81 only)
Ms M Squires (M.21-22/85 only)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Y Birks, Professor M Fairclough,
Professor P Ketikidis, and Professor K Trehan.

21-22/71 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.

21-22/72 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2022

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on **2 February 2022** (RC.21-22/50). It was **requested** that details of the discussion held during M.21-22/59 concerning support for PGR supervisors be reflected more prominently in the minutes. This would be amended as appropriate.

ACTION: ZC

21-22/73 Research Committee action log

The Committee **received** a progress report against its action log for 2021/22 (RC.21-22/51). Further to the information provided, the Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) M.21-22/55, 56 & 57: The Codes of Practice and the Policy for Payment of Individuals for Involvement with or Contribution to Research would all be presented to the YGRS Polices and Programmes Sub-Committee in due course.
- (b) M.21-22/55: Language in section five of the Policy for Payment of Individuals for Involvement with or Contribution to Research, concerning breaches of policy, would be retained for now. A more widescale review of language used in such policy sections would be initiated to ensure consistency across policies.

21-22/74 Report from the Chair

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

- (a) The University Sustainability Strategy had been approved in principle by Council. Consultation would take place with Siemens to ascertain the available options regarding power supply and resource use – these ranged from carbon offsetting schemes to a re- envisioning of campus infrastructure. Council and UEB would consider next steps in due course, with the intent of developing an ambitious approach consisting of real behavioural change, and it was **acknowledged** that such work would focus on wider factors such as water use and waste management. It was **noted** that the environmental impact of research was increasingly considered by funders (in particular health funders). The Committee **recognised** that the cost of implementing sustainability efforts may place further pressure on researchers; this would be considered going forwards. Plans would be presented to URC for information in due course.

ACTION: Chair, ZC

- (b) Further to the above, the Committee **noted** the importance of giving researchers the tools to make informed choices as regards travel for conferences and other events, recognising the importance both of responsible travel and international links. Recent savings on travel had been used to support other sustainability activity at the University.
- (c) The transformational initiatives continued to be developed, and a paper would shortly be presented to UEB to outline a business case for supporting these.
- (d) The deadline for Horizon Europe guarantees had been extended until 31 December 2022.

- (e) The Universities Minister had made further information available concerning support for Ukrainian refugees, families and academics, including visa extensions. Detail was available on the Russell Group website.

21-22/75 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 School had reached out to students and colleagues affected by the Russo-Ukrainian war and put appropriate support in place. A co-ordinated approach for wellbeing and hardship would deal with each instance on a case-by-case basis.
- The recently completed Annual Programme Review and postgraduate survey had both been useful in identifying themes on which to focus over the next year.
- The UKRI New Deal for PGRs was in train, with responses to a current consultation due by mid-May. The consultation for the New Deal was rather broad, and so YGRS would focus their response on the most relevant activity areas to the institution.

21-22/76 Annual Report from the York Graduate Research School

The Committee **considered** the annual report on the York Graduate Research School (RC.21-22/52). Further to the information provided, the Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) The HESA headcount presented in the report only included students within their registration period, and so didn't account for students outside this period still in receipt of support in writing up their work.
- (b) A number of successes were reported, including the continued development of University Vision and Mission Statements as part of the YGRS Ten Year Plan, and progress with regards to the 18-month plan to diversify programmes and optimise recruitment. It was **suggested** that the objectives identified by the School include on more explicitly about student experience. The Committee **noted** that the title of the 'How to Survive Your PhD' guide recently developed by the School sounded negative, and suggested that it be changed.
- (c) It was **clarified** that YGRSB would now report directly to Senate, with minutes continuing to be shared with URC for information.
- ACTION: ZC to ensure this is reflected in the URC Terms of Reference**
- (d) YGRS had pushed back on the suggestion that funded PhD students be treated as members of staff, noting that such a change would distort the sector. It would be possible to analyse the Student-Staff ratio at Faculty- and department-level. This had been picked up as part of previous REF reviews.
- (e) The comparatively low conversion rate (compared to the number of applications received) was **noted**, as was the suggestion that this might be due in part to unfeasible applications and high workload within departments.

21-22/77 Terms of Reference for the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee

The Committee **approved** the Terms of Reference for the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee (CTSC) (RC.21-22/53). Further to the information provided, the Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) This was the first update to the Terms of Reference in some time, with the updates serving to bring the Terms in line with regulatory language and requirements at this stage. Consideration had also been given to the types of research the University might like to become involved with in the future, and how the Terms might best facilitate this.
- (b) It was **suggested** that a summary accompany the Terms of Reference, noting the responsibilities of the Committee and its specific remit with respect to research. It was **clarified** that some aspects of the Terms – such as references to ‘safety and efficacy’ and the inclusion of some medical devices but not others – appeared contradictory, however this was due to the regulatory environment in which the CTSC operated and reflected the proposed management of risks.
- (c) The CTSC continued to consider the potential for the University acting as sole sponsor of CTIMPs – a paper would come to URC when appropriate. It was **acknowledged** that the final decision as to CTIMPs sponsorship would not lie with CTSC.

ACTION: KAt, MB

- (d) It was **clarified** that, although the environmental impact of research was an important consideration, this was outside the remit of the CTSC. It was **noted** that the procedures governing clinical trials would apply also to PGRs, however it was unlikely that a PGR would lead on a trial due to the complexity and level of expertise required. The regulatory framework confirms this.
- (e) Research Committee **recommended** that the membership of the CTSC be broadened in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

21-22/78 Report from the Director of Research, Innovation & Knowledge Exchange (*FoI Exempt*)

The Committee **received** a report on recent activity in the Research, Innovation & Knowledge Exchange (RI&KE) Directorate, **noting** the following in particular:

- (a) A number of priorities were outlined by the Director, including the following: (i) the professional services delivery workstream, on which further information would come to the Committee in due course, (ii) efforts to increase industrial income (a proposal for this would be presented to UEB shortly), (iii) the review of research policy and compliance support, (iv) commercialisation, (v) project support, and (vi) themes emerging from the Faculty planning process.
- (b) A new process for the managing of complex bids was **noted**. Further details would be available in the slides associated with the report.

ACTION: ZC to circulate slides

21-22/79 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)

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

Sciences

- (a) In keeping with the faculty's growing interest in translational research and industrial engagement the Department of Computer Science had completed its re-organisation of its research around nine groups with cross-cutting industry-oriented themes.
- (b) Active planning is now underway for the future of the Assuring Autonomy International Programme, with a transition to Assuring Autonomy in Practice. The two 'Technologies for the Future' Research Theme Champions would take forward work to establish the University's position on data science, machine learning and AI.
- (c) The 1kD Wellcome Leap programme was approaching the end of its first phase. The first in person meeting had been successful, and the first in person visit to York from the Wellcome Leap team would take place on 28 March.
- (d) A number of awards were reported, including an EPSRC XR Network+ award on Virtual Production in the Digital Economy, led by Professor Damian Murphy leading a collaboration of 5 universities; an MRC grant to lead the National Mouse Genetics Network in Biology worth £2.5M and led by Dr David Kent, and ERC Consolidator awards won by Dr Alison Parkin and Dr Martin Fascione in Chemistry. Dr Correia Faria (Biology) had been awarded the Wellcome-Beit Prize and President's Medal of the British Society for Parasitology for 2022, and Lucy Hudson (Biology) had been made a Fellow of the Institute of Science and Technology in recognition of her work as a technician and technical manager for more than 30 years.

Arts & Humanities

- (a) Funding from the World Health Organisation for the Centre for Global Health History had been reconfirmed until 2025. The AHRC IAA bid submitted by the HRC had not been successful and so the YIAF would continue to support the Centre.
- (b) DC Labs had initiated a digital surgery for grant applications, offering support across the Faculty. The 'From Researcher to Research Leader' programme was underway, but had been delayed somewhat due to strike action.
- (c) In support of the institutional aim of being a University public good, the Place and Community Initiative continued to work with local groups, such as Yorkshire Museum. A recent event, with poetry, talks, film and photography, as part of LGBT History Month had been well-received.
- (d) A number of queries had been received regarding work with colleagues in Russia. These would be addressed on a case-by-basis.

21-22/80 Proposed plans for the release of REF results

The Committee **received** an oral report on the proposed plans for the release and analysis of the REF 2021 results in May 2022. The Policy, Integrity and Performance Officer for

Management Information attended to speak to this item alongside the Director of Communications and the Research Reputation and Marketing Manager. The following points were **noted**:

(a) A communications group involving departmental leads would be set up by the REF Planning Working Group. The Committee **requested** that the call for nominations be recirculated in order to have the widest possible reach. Templates would be prepared in advance to enable departments to quickly prepare their results for public dissemination. The Communications team would use national-level data prepared by REF to understand which formats of dissemination worked best, as well as involving colleagues and practitioners from across the institution.

ACTION: RB, SP

(b) The Committee **suggested** that space for department-level reflection on results be built into the process, including notifying HoDs of results in advance of group briefings. It was **recognised** that reflection on REF results would continue in the long-term following publication, and that in-depth analysis would take place over time.

ACTION: AT

Slides would be circulated to colleagues following the meeting.

ACTION: ZC

21-22/81 Rights Retention Policy

The Committee **approved** proposals for the rights retention policy (RC.21-22/56). The Director of Library and Archives attended to speak to this item. The following points were **noted**:

(a) It was beneficial for the University to align with other N8 institutions. Further advice would be needed in order to implement such a policy, however this was easier to seek as part of a coordinated response.

(b) It was essential that researchers be empowered to make informed choices, and effective briefing materials articulating the rights and responsibilities of researchers would assist in this.

ACTION: KL

(c) The Committee **recommended** that insight be sought from colleagues with editorial roles at journals in order to get a sense of what they are aware of and any further support needed.

ACTION: KL

(d) Further discussion concerning the applicability of the proposals to PGR students would be picked up outside the meeting.

ACTION: KL

21-22/82 Oral report on T&S staff access to PURE accounts

The Committee **received** an oral report on T&S staff access to PURE accounts. It was **noted** that this was a complex and long-standing issue; the financial and technical aspects could be addressed, but would require an investment of time and resource. Colleagues in Teaching &

Learning were aware of the issue and a review of promotions criteria was underway currently. The Committee **acknowledged** the importance of supporting action in this area and remaining up to date with developments. Further discussion would be brought to the Committee as relevant. The Policy on Staff Groups Seeking to Engage with Research Activities would need to be updated following more widescale change.

ACTION: JG

The Committee **emphasised** the importance of the situation for many colleagues across the institution, especially in terms of career development. Although it was possible for T&S staff to be granted a PURE account on an individual basis, this was not a permanent solution. The Chair would follow up with his counterpart in Teaching & Learning, Professor T Lightfoot, to ensure prioritisation.

ACTION: Chair

21-22/83 Further revisions to the Code of Practice on Research Integrity

The Committee **approved** the proposed revisions to the Code of Practice on Research Integrity (RC.21-22/54). The Code would be presented to Senate and to the YGRS Policies and Programmes Subcommittee.

ACTION: ZC

21-22/84 Research Income, Applications and Awards: Year to Date January 2022 including Q2 research income (Confidential & FoI Exempt)

The Committee **discussed** a report on Research Income, Applications and Awards: Year to Date January 2022 including Q2 research income (RC.21-22/57). The Policy, Integrity and Performance Officer (Management Information) attended to speak to this item. Further to the information provided in the paper, the following points were **noted**:

(a) An update would be presented at the May meeting of URC as to the sharing of data with colleagues in Faculties and Departments.

ACTION: AMc

(b) The Committee **noted** that funders were developing tools which would enable funding decision panels to see in greater detail the breakdown of direct and indirect costs; conversation on this count would be picked up outside the meeting.

ACTION: Chair, KB

21-22/85 Five-Year Forecast (Confidential & FoI Exempt)

[Redacted due to commercial sensitivity]

21-22/86 Report on the Impact Fortnight

The Committee **received for information** a report on the Impact Fortnight (RC.21-22/55). Questions of the content of the report could be directed to the University Impact Manager or the Chair.

ACTION: Members as relevant

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

20-21/87 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences meeting held on 18 January 2022.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 18 January 2022 (RC.21-22/59).

20-21/88 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts & Humanities meeting held on 24 January 2022.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts & Humanities held on 24 January 2022 (RC.21-22/60).

20-21/89 Minutes of the York Graduate Research School Board meeting held on 21 February 2022.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 21 February 2022 (RC.21-22/61).

20-21/90 Next meeting

The Committee noted details of the next meeting: Wednesday 4 May 2022 at 9.30am, via Zoom.

zc/zc

March 2022