

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2022

Present: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor M Ruth (Chair)
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Sciences, Professor S Thompson
Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Social Sciences,
Professor Y Birks
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 M Fairclough
Professor A Manca
Professor J Richards
Professor S Smith
Professor J Thijssen (M.21-22/48-54 only)
Dr Merran Toerien
Director of Research, Innovation & Knowledge Exchange, Dr A Jackson
Associate Director of Research, Innovation & Knowledge Exchange, Ms J
Gilmartin

In attendance: Ms Z Clarke (Secretary)
Ms C Walsh (Policy, Integrity and Performance Office)
Ms N Booker (Project Officer for Pro-Vice-Chancellors)
Professor P Ketikidis (Vice-President for Research and Innovation, CITY
College, Thessaloniki) (M.21-22/48-59 only)
Ms J Mayne (M.21-22/57 & 58 only)
Dr K Clegg

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Brian Fulton and Professor Ambrose Field.

21-22/48 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.

21-22/49 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on **25 November 2021** (RC.21-22/34).

21-22/50 Research Committee action log

The Committee **received** a progress report against its action log for 2021/22 (RC.21-22/35). Further to the information provided, the Committee **noted** the following:

- (a) M.21-22/31: following the withdrawal of the oral report from the Dean of YGRS at the November meeting, notes had been circulated to members for information.
- (b) M.21-22/36: Reference to the 'Institutional Statement on Research Integrity' was in error, and would be corrected to read 'Institutional Statement on Responsible Research and Innovation'.
- (c) M.21-22/15: work on expenses associated with conference attendance and the membership of learned societies would be picked up in due course now that work on the payments for individuals taking part in research was near conclusion.

21-22/51 Report from the Chair

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

- Professor S Thompson, Associate Dean (Research) for the Sciences, had accepted an expansion of role to work on two major University initiatives: (i) providing academic leadership for the Professional Services Delivery workstream and (ii) working on improving and further embedding industrial engagement within the institution.
- Professor L Carpenter had been awarded an MBE in the 2022 New Year Honours for services to atmospheric chemistry – the Committee **congratulated** her on this award.
- It had been recognised within the institution that opportunities for individuals to receive awards or prizes for their work often involved a large investment of time and effort in developing applications. The benefits to both individual and institution when York talent is acknowledged were numerous, and the Project Officer (PVCs) had initiated work in this area, with the aim of supporting and developing mechanisms to enhance the institutional profile. A pilot project would soon be rolled out, with opportunities for learning ongoing.

21-22/52 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 York Centre for Equity in Doctoral Education (YCEDE) had officially launched. This would be a four-year programme of work, with students and staff sought for both research and internships, and had the aim of improving access to postgraduate education for members of the BAME community. Activity was ongoing in this space, including the launch of six funded PhD positions.

- The ESRC response to the Independent Review of PhDs in the Social Sciences was now available, and included a number of important points of interest to the Committee: (i) it was now required that DDPs included EDI strategies, (ii) the forms used in applying for positions had been altered, (iii) there was now an expectation that research in practice be included as a formal component of PhDs (including a mandatory three month placement opportunity), and (iv) more defined expectations for supervisors, including the provision of CPD opportunities. York was in a strong position when it came to the provision of support for supervisors, and was exploring ways in which to establish robust mentoring schemes. It was **noted** that this area was likely to become more explicit in funding requirements in light of the sector focus on research culture.
- The international recruitment of overseas PGRs had remained constant over the previous five years. There had been a year on year increase in applications, but this had not translated to increased enrolment. There were a number of possible barriers that might contribute to the situation, which could be addressed as necessary.

21-22/53 Reports from the Associate Deans (Research)

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

Sciences

- (a) Work continued on the Professional Services Delivery workstream, and progress was being made in the development of Terms of Reference for the working group and the initiation of discussion with key stakeholders. It was **clarified** that input would be sought from the community. Work on industrial engagement was in the early stages.
- (b) Major grant successes had taken place within the Faculty, including within YBRI, Electronic Engineering and the physics of life research area.

Arts & Humanities

- (a) Activity continued within the Faculty. The Place and Community Fund launch had taken place before Christmas and had offered a key networking opportunity for colleagues. A workshop with York Museums Trust was in development, and a range of collaboration options had been identified. The 'From Researcher to Research Leader' programme was underway with a cohort of approximately 20 researchers. The next meeting would take place in March, working with PDRAs. The University was represented on the City of York Culture Forum; such involvement would be supportive in terms of fulfilling University strategic aims.
- (b) Departments were considering the implementation of semesterisation and the establishment of the new School of Digital Creativity and the Performing Arts.

Social Sciences

- (a) Discussion was taking place to identify Faculty goals. The review of ReCSS would be picked up in due course, following postponement during the C-19 pandemic; there was interest in pursuing a greater interdisciplinary agenda in this space, with options for

cross-department working such as open workspaces and facilities designed to aid conversation.

- (b) The new Dean for the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor K Rowlingson, would be in post soon. Professor Rowlingson had a strong research record, and the Faculty was looking forward to her involvement.

21-22/54 Report from the Director of Research, Innovation & Knowledge Exchange (Fol Exempt)

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

- (a) The Professional Services Delivery workstream working group had developed a high-level blueprint based on principles and aims, and the implementation group would work on ensuring this was reflected in roles, processes and systems across the institution. Time for a post-implementation review was built into the process.
- (b) The importance of clear and efficient communication was **emphasised**. It was **clarified** that the aims of the Professional Services Delivery workstream were to address and ameliorate the fragmentation present in some aspects of research support – for example, in the end-to-end support for grants – as well as recognising the importance of Faculty-level support.
- (c) The Committee **emphasised** the importance of retaining systems and processes that were already effective.

21-22/55 Policy on the Payment of Individuals for Involvement with and Contribution to Research

The Committee **received for information** the Policy on the Payment of Individuals for Involvement with and Contribution to Research (RC.21-22/36). Further to the information provided in the paper, the following points were **noted**:

- (a) Ensuring that the policy was well-communicated and that there was awareness of requirements within the community was essential. It was **recommended** that section five of the policy (Breaches of Policy) be removed.

ACTION: ZC

- (b) It was **clarified** that the policy was based on UK tax rates, and so research taking place overseas would need to be considered case by case. The issue of charitable donations in lieu of payments to participants would need further consideration.
- (c) Following consideration by URC, the policy would be presented to colleagues at YRAF. A suite of public-facing webpages would be developed in partnership with members of the public, with the aim that these be completed by the summer. An update would be presented to the Committee in June, outlining the webpages and implementation thus far.

ACTION: ZC

- (d) It was requested that the policy be disseminated amongst the PGR community.

ACTION: JG, ZC

The Committee **endorsed** the policy and the proposed dissemination strategy. An update on implementation would be presented to the June meeting of the Committee.

21-22/56 Proposed Changes to the Code of Practice on Research Integrity

The Committee **considered** the proposed changes to the Code of Practice on Research Integrity (RC.21-22/37), and **noted** the following:

(a) The Code of Practice did not contain specific reference to PGR students and PhD programmes; it was **requested** that this be added. Annotated comments on the document needed consideration, and should be incorporated as relevant.

ACTION: ZC

(b) The Code of Practice should be presented to the Policies and Programmes subcommittee of the York Graduate Research School Board to ensure alignment with YGRS policies.

ACTION: ZC

The Committee **requested** that the Code of Practice be brought back for further consideration, in light of the above comments.

ACTION: ZC

The Committee **approved** the creation of a 'Users Guide' to accompany the Code of Practice.

ACTION: ZC in partnership with PIP and professional services colleagues

21-22/57 Proposed Changes to the Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance

The Committee **considered** the proposed changes to the Code of Practice and Principles for Good Ethical Governance (RC.21-22/38). The Policy, Integrity and Performance Officer for Ethics attended to speak to this item. The following was **noted**:

(a) Following discussion prior to the meeting, it was suggested that section 2.13 be removed. The Committee **endorsed** this decision.

ACTION: JM

(b) It was **clarified** that working with the tobacco industry was specifically forbidden due to the requirements of other key funders. The tension between maintaining a consistent approach across the University on various controversial issues and preserving academic freedom was **noted**.

(c) The Committee **requested** clarification as to whether a clear definition of research funding was available. This would be picked up outside the meeting.

ACTION: JM

(d) The need for effective and comprehensive dissemination was **noted**. The Committee **approved** the creation of a 'Users Guide' to accompany the Code of Practice.

ACTION: JM in partnership with PIP and professional services colleagues

The Committee **approved** the proposed changes to the Code of Practice, subject to further consideration of the above comments.

21-22/58 Annual report from the Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee

The Committee **approved** the annual report from the Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee (RC.21-22/39). The Policy, Integrity and Performance Officer for Ethics attended to speak to this item. Further to the information provided in the paper, the following points were **noted**:

- (a) Work was underway to establish a Professional Services Ethics Committee which would feed into the AECC. It was reported that a Chair (Dr Nadia Mifka-Profozic) and Deputy Chair (Dr Adam Dawkins) had been identified.
- (b) The question of ethics governance in the new Schools established at the University would be picked up outside the meeting.

ACTION: JM

- (c) Regarding the difficulty in retaining student members, it was **suggested** that such roles might be best directed towards PGR students with an emphasis on professional development opportunities.

ACTION: JM

21-22/59 Research Supervision Survey: Data and Implications for Practice at York

The Committee **discussed** a report on data from the recent Research Supervision Survey, including information on implications for practice at York (RC.21-22/40). The Head of Research Excellence Training attended to speak to this item. The following points were **noted**:

- (a) The survey, which had been initiated by the Head of Research Excellence Training, had generated some positive feedback of note: (i) there was a high-level of satisfaction in the role and enjoyment of it amongst supervisors, (ii) supervisors at York were largely confident in their ability to understand and adhere to policies, and (iii) supervisors felt valued by their supervisees.
- (b) [*Sentence redacted due to confidentiality*]. It was **noted** that a focus on improving knowledge of funder requirements as part of professional development opportunities would be beneficial.
- (c) The survey had further highlighted areas of focus for supervisor support:
 - i. Support for the supervision of interdisciplinary projects;
 - ii. The provision of mandatory professional development opportunities for both those recruiting research students and those supervising them;
 - iii. Guidance for the supervision of students from non-traditional backgrounds; *and*
 - iv. Building in reflection opportunities – in this regard, a pilot Community of Practice had been initiated across three departments. It was further noted that easier access to student feedback might enable more effective reflection, and this would be fed back to those organising the promotions process.
- (d) The issue of workload associated with PGR students who had had their project extended was **noted**. Although workload models were developed at department-level, it was important that supervisors were aware of the range of support options across the institution. Further information on the time required for extended PGRs was needed.

- (e) The value in setting expectations early on in the supervisor/student relationship was **noted**.
- (f) Further data on joint supervision would be helpful. Although workload management took place at a department- or Faculty-level, joint supervision was valuable and in need of full consideration.

21-22/60 Research Grant Applications and Awards: Year to Date December 2021 including four year comparison (Confidential & FoI Exempt)

[Redacted for reasons of commercial sensitivity].

CATEGORY II BUSINESS

20-21/61 Minutes of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee (CTSC) meeting held on 26 July 2021 and 24 November 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee (CTSC) held on 26 July 2021 and 24 November 2021 (RC.21-22/42). The issue of recruiting support for CTIMPS within the sector was **noted**.

20-21/62 Minutes of the Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee meeting held on 3 December 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee held on 3 December 2021 (RC.21-22/43).

20-21/63 ESRC Annual Ethics Audit.

The Committee **received** for information the ESRC Annual Ethics Audit, previously approved by the Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee (RC.21-22/44).

20-21/64 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Sciences meeting held on 2 December 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of Faculty Research Group for the Sciences held on 2 December 2021 (RC.21-22/45).

20-21/65 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences meeting held on 7 December 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Social Sciences held on 7 December 2021 (RC.21-22/46).

20-21/66 Minutes of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts & Humanities meeting held on 29 November 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Research Group for the Arts & Humanities held on 29 November 2021 (RC.21-22/47).

20-21/67 Minutes of the York Graduate Research School Board meeting held on 22 June 2021.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 22 June 2021 (RC.21-22/48).

20-21/68 Minutes of the York Graduate Research School Board meeting held on 6 January 2022, including revised Terms of Reference.

The Committee **received** for information the minutes of the meeting of the York Graduate Research School Board held on 6 January 2022, including revised Terms of Reference (RC.21-22/49).

20-21/70 Next meeting

The Committee noted details of the next meeting: Wednesday 16 March 2022 and 9.30am, via Zoom.

zc/zc

February 2022