

# UNIVERSITY OF YORK

## Senate

### Research Committee

#### **Matters for note by Senate arising from the meeting of Research Committee on 29 September 2022**

##### **1. Terms of Reference (*Appendix 1*)**

The Committee considered the draft Terms of Reference for the Committee. It was recommended that a Research Strategy be developed due to its benefits in articulating the strengths and opportunities for the institution. 2(a)(i) of the Terms of Reference would be amended to refer to the 'research elements of the University Strategy'. Although the current University Strategy emphasised the integration of teaching and research, it was agreed that a Strategy focusing on research would be helpful in providing an overview of activity at the institution. Departments and Faculties were in the process of initiating strategic conversations currently, and it was suggested that the results of these conversations could be used to assist in the development of a University Research Strategy.

The Committee approved the draft Terms of Reference subject to the above amendment. The establishment of a Task and Finish group to explore the development of a Research Strategy was also approved.

##### **2. Proposed Priorities for 2022/23**

The Committee considered potential priorities for 2022/23. The following points were noted:

- (a) The discussion taking place in the meeting was intended to kickstart the conversation around priorities, with more refined suggestions to be presented in November for approval.
- (b) It was recommended that stronger links between the Committee and colleagues working on research culture and reputation be established, allowing for a broader overview of research health at the institution. It was important that the Committee be an active participant in the research culture work taking place, rather than simply a recipient of the work.
- (c) It would be helpful to better articulate the division of responsibility between Departments, Faculties and the central University.
- (d) There was scope to develop statements of values held by the University in regards to core issues, bearing in mind the grey areas surrounding controversial topics and the need for nuance. Discussion of the impact of semesterisation on research was needed; this could be picked up at Research Forum.

##### **3. Knowledge Exchange Governance**

The Committee considered Knowledge Exchange (KE) Governance at departmental level. The following was noted:

- (a) It was important to consider the workload of colleagues, and to ensure that any decisions made did not increase the bureaucracy surrounding such processes. It was recognised that work in this area needed to focus on facilitating impact without requiring excessive reporting, however it was also noted that reporting activity helped to enable further activity.
- (b) Further consideration was needed to fully assess the most effective organisational structure for KE Governance, in order to assist departments and faculties in being as proactive as possible. It was requested that PGRs be explicitly included in any decisions made.
- (c) Consistency was needed across departments and faculties, as well as clarity regarding organisation at the institutional level.

- (d) The Committee recommended a number of specific changes and requested that the proposals be further developed and reconsidered at the next meeting.

#### 4. Research Themes and Champions: the next phase of support for Research and Knowledge Exchange Development

The Committee considered a report on research themes and champions: the next phase of support for Research and Knowledge Exchange Development. The importance of avoiding an overly-prescriptive approach, which had the potential to silo research and dissuade researchers from engaging, was noted. It was hoped that the Sparks Programme would be effective in this sense. There was still a role for cross-Faculty oversight and structures, with consideration of how research opportunities can be identified and developed most effectively. Engagement from the Committee and the research community more widely on this area (Recommendation 3) was welcomed.

The Committee endorsed the proposed direction of travel in light of the above comments.

#### 5. PURE Development Plan 2022/23

The Committee approved the proposed PURE Development Plan for 2022/23. The following points were noted:

- (a) The Development Plan contained a number of items for long-term consideration, such as the launch of the York Research Database (YRD) (launched on 4 October 2022). These would be approached in due course.
- (b) Functionality for users was essential, and it was **requested** that the ability to export lists of publications, for example, be made available. Plans were in place to make the YRD more configurable for individuals.
- (c) It was **clarified** that PGRs were able to have a PURE profile, however a clear user case for this would be required. Finance would need to be consulted to assess whether an increase in the number of licenses held by the institution was needed. This was the same in the case of staff on T&S contracts and emeritus professors.
- (d) The current project to replace the YRD was a product replacement, moving away from the current custom-built portal used by the University. Further change would take place in summer 2023 when additional tools to configure the portal to the University were made available by Elsevier.

#### 6. Other Business

- (a) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Committee recommended a number of areas for further analysis, which would be taken forward in due course. It was confirmed that data from Tableau could be shared with the wider University community, and the most appropriate way to do so was currently under discussion.

- (b) Work continued to further refine and review the management of research entities, in the interest in efficiency and effective oversight. It was clarified that, although a similar process review had taken place previously, issues remained to be addressed in order to make the process more as efficient and transparent as possible.
- (c) The York Consortium for Equity in Doctoral Education (YCEDE) continued to progress, and number of research interns had been recruited over summer. A range of scholarships and networks were under development. Further updates would be presented to URC in due course.
- (d) The issue of workload placed on staff across Faculties was noted.
- (e) Work continued on the PSD with a focus on harmonisation and consistent standards across activities.

## Appendix A: Terms of Reference

### UNIVERSITY OF YORK

#### Senate

#### UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE (URC)

##### 1. COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

[University Research Committee](#) (URC) oversees research activity at the University, reporting to the University [Senate](#) which oversees all academic matters. URC advises Senate and the [University Executive Board](#) on strategy, approves internal policy and monitors the research performance of the institution.

URC is responsible for:

1. Considering and approving proposed University policy with relation to research;
2. Advising upon the University Strategy and, as appropriate, approving strategies with relation to research;
3. Assessing research performance and monitoring progress against key internal and external indicators;
4. Identifying priority areas for research support and advising on a framework in which to support the effective provision of this; *and*
5. Supporting engagement with key internal and external stakeholders.

##### 2. COMMITTEE REMIT

The remit of the Committee under the following core, agenda-aligned headings, is:

##### 2 a) Strategic Development, Planning, Performance Monitoring and Resourcing

Items for consideration and/or decision

- i. To advise Senate and the University Executive Board on all matters relating to the research elements of the University Strategy; to support the development of the University Strategy and to support the Vice-Chancellor, the University Executive Board and Pro-Vice-Chancellor(s) in driving the strategy forward.
- ii. To identify priority areas for research support and to advise the University Executive Board on organisational structures for research, on the selective distribution of resources within the University in order to ensure appropriate alignment of resource allocation with research strategy, and where other initiatives within the University have implications for research activity.
- iii. To monitor the research performance of the institution and its academic departments, entities and faculties in terms of research quality, sustainability of research income, and impact, drawing on national and international benchmarking data; and to advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on areas where improvements could be made, where there are significant risks and/or where new opportunities may be pursued.
- iv. To support the University in its engagement with key external stakeholders relating to research, including business, industry, the government, cultural institutions and funding agencies.
- v. To influence the development of research policy and strategy of key national and international agencies in the interests of the University (e.g. UKRI, Research Councils, Research England, European Union).

##### 2 b) Policy and Regulatory Matters

- i. To set internal policy in response to external requirements (e.g. peer review processes, external research assessment), and to make recommendations and report in these areas to the University Senate and University Executive Board.
- ii. To monitor policy concerning research in relation to external requirements, ensuring that regulatory needs are met.
- iii. To champion and promote research excellence and integrity, and to oversee the development and maintenance of the supporting policy framework, reporting annually to Senate and Council.
- iv. To receive annual updates from departments on research activities and performance including research impact, in order to advise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research on areas where improvements could be made, where there are significant risks and/or where new opportunities may be pursued.

### 3. COMMITTEE AUTHORITY

On behalf of Senate, URC is empowered to make decisions relating to research and to seek assurance relating to the quality of these activities as set out above. It can also make recommendations and/or refer items to Senate, UEB, UTC, UPEC and other University committees as appropriate.

URC has no direct budgetary control but is able to endorse and support proposed activities in relation to research support. URC is able to review and/or set strategic priorities for research funding.

### 4. REPORTING AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The following groups report to University Research Committee:

- Faculty Research Groups
- University Research Priming Committee
- Clinical Trials Sponsorship Committee
- York Graduate Research School Board
- Research Reputation Strategy Group
- Open Research Strategy Group
- Mental Health Research Strategy Group
- Centre for Future Health Steering Group
- Academic Ethics and Compliance Committee
- Research Systems Steering Group

**Meeting frequency:** a minimum of six times per year, with the facility to transact and record decisions by written resolution or, where necessary, Chair's Action.

**Meeting modes:** Meetings in 2022/23 to be primarily held online, via Zoom.

### 5. CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

The membership of URC is a combination of *ex officio* appointments, including academic leaders, representatives of professional services, and representatives of academic staff appointed by Senate. In contributing to the business of URC, members represent the offices against which they are listed in the Committee's constituency. In the case of elected academic members, these members represent the broad academic community at the University of York, rather than the interests of their individual departments. The Faculty Deans and Associate Deans (Research) provide the link between the Faculties and the Committee.

Academic staff representatives should be drawn from each of the three Faculties, with no two members from the same department, and should between them have sufficient experience to be able to speak to Committee activities.

Proxy or alternate members are not permitted. Individual colleagues may be invited to attend for select items as and when the need arises.

In order to ensure that the Committee's business is conducted robustly and transparently, members are required to identify and report any pertinent potential or actual conflicts of interest, both via an annual exercise, and on an ongoing ad hoc basis should such conflicts become apparent in the interim. This enables the conduct of the Committee's work to be adapted accordingly and the conflicts mitigated. Details of procedures for handling conflicts of interest are set out in a separate document, available from the Policy, Integrity and Performance Office.

Members may be required from time to time to undertake additional activities, for example (i) membership of review panels, (ii) membership of the Research Priming Fund committee and (iii) representation on working groups.

**Quorum:** 50% of members, or 50%+ 1 member where the number of members is not even.

**Membership Review:** membership will be periodically reviewed by the Committee itself for Senate approval. Membership is otherwise co-terminous with the individual's appointment term. Gender balance and wider EDI considerations should be factored into the Committee's reflection on its own size and composition.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Chair)
  - **Professor Matthias Ruth**
- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Partnerships and Engagement (*ex officio*)
  - **Professor Kiran Trehan**
- The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (*ex officio*)
  - **Professor Sarah Thompson**
- The Dean of the York Graduate Research School (*ex officio*)
  - **Dr Kathryn Arnold**
- The Deans of Faculty (*ex officio*)
  - **Professor Andy Dougill** (Sciences)
  - **Professor Ambrose Field** (Interim Dean, Arts and Humanities)
  - **Professor Karen Rowlingson** (Social Sciences)
- The Faculty Associate Deans (Research) (*ex officio*)
  - **Professor Jane Hill** (Sciences)
  - **Professor Richard Ogden** (Arts and Humanities)
  - **Professor Yvonne Birks** (Social Sciences)

- The Director of Research and Enterprise (*ex officio*)
  - **Dr Andy Jackson**
- The Associate Director and Head of Research Services (*ex officio*)
  - **Ms Jennifer Gilmartin**
- The Head of Policy, Integrity and Performance (*ex officio*)
  - **Dr Andrew Taylor**
- Three academic members from each Academic Faculty, normally with experience on Departmental Senior Management Teams. No two of these members should be from the same department.
  - **Professor Michael White** (until September 2025)  
History of Art
  - **Professor Julian Richards** (until September 2024)  
Archaeology
  - **Professor Mary Fairclough** (until September 2024)  
English & Related Literature
  - **Professor Jamie Wood** (until September 2025)  
Biology/Mathematics
  - **Professor Lucy Carpenter** (until September 2024)  
Chemistry
  - **Professor Karen Bloor** (until September 2024)  
Health Sciences
  - **Professor Charlotte O'Brien** (until September 2025)  
Law
  - **Professor Andrea Manca** (until September 2024)  
Centre for Health Economics
  - **Dr Merran Toerien** (until September 2024)  
Sociology

*In attendance*

- Policy, Integrity and Performance Officer (Secretary)
  - **Ms Zoe Clarke**
- Representative of CITY College, Thessaloniki to be invited by Professor Ruth to be in attendance for two meetings of URC per year (with these meetings featuring specific discussion of CITY). High priority items can be brought as relevant outside these allocated meetings.
  - **Professor Panayiotis Ketikidis**, Vice President for Research and Innovation