

# UNIVERSITY OF YORK

## Senate

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

#### Matters for note by Senate arising from the meeting of Research Committee on 18 June 2025

##### 1. Update on Preparations for the REF

The Committee **considered** a report on preparations for the REF 2029. The University REF Manager reported the following:

1. The paper presented to the Committee would be adapted following discussion before onward submission to Senate at their next meeting.
2. Endorsement was sought of the internal timeline for the REF submission, which had been developed on the basis of external announcements and was available in a more granular form within the PIP team.
3. Faculty REF Review Groups had been established, with draft Terms of Reference in place. These groups would be responsible for reviewing REF Check submissions. The Faculty of Arts & Humanities also had a Working Group in place which was supported by the Review Group. It was important to be explicit about the University's strategy for the REF, which was to maximise GPA score and overall ranking.
4. Output guidance had been made available by Research England and further information would be made available from the PIP Team in due course.

The Committee noted the following:

1. Panel members had not yet been announced however details of Chairs and Deputy Chairs were available. Full panel memberships were expected to be announced in July.
2. It was important to ensure alignment across departments in the case of cross-disciplinary research. Insights regarding opportunities for such research would come from UoAs during internal REF Checks. The University REF Manager was able to assist in identifying potential cross-disciplinary outputs.
3. The development of draft impact case studies by summer 2026 (two years prior to submission) was regarded as early by some departments, however this deadline had been chosen to allow time to identify and fix issues. Guidance on impact and engagement was expected from Research England by the end of 2025.
4. The need to provide support for marginalised research was noted, and it was important to provide resources to support researchers as needed. It was clarified that there had been a loosening of output requirements and that, although Unit Reduction Requests were available, these would only be applied in exceptional situations.

##### 2. Review of the Research Reputation and Social Responsibility Framework

The Committee considered a report on the review of the Research Reputation and Social Responsibility Framework. The Framework had been in operation for 12 months and as such was due to be reviewed. The paper summarised feedback received and would be taken to UEB following consideration at URC, with final wording to return for approval in due course.

The Committee noted the following:

1. In the first year of implementation the escalation procedure had been used infrequently. Further consideration was needed as to how and when usage was appropriate and how to ensure cases were referred when needed. The development of a more comprehensive list of triggers was suggested, however the potential for researchers to interpret such lists as prescriptive rather than indicative was noted. The need for greater clarity regarding defence funding was emphasised.
2. It was recognised that decisions made use the Framework would be informed by both internal and external factors, and that a range of opinions regarding the role of the University and research needed

to be considered when deciding on cases.

3. It was acknowledged that the small number of cases taken through the Framework did not mean that similar discussions were not happening at the local level to determine comfort with research and potential funding sources.

### **3. Faculty Reports on the Annual Research Review (ARR) Process**

The Committee considered reports on the ARR Process. The ARR reports would be used to plan business for the URC Away Day and meetings over 2025/2026.

The Committee noted the following:

1. The following emerged as major themes from the Faculty reports: staff time for research (workload), staff morale, the impacts of voluntary severance and cost cutting measures, effective and efficient communications, cost-recovery (and messaging around this), cuts to the Library and relationships with publishers, and maintaining an effective research environment commensurate with being a research intensive university..
2. A similar report would be prepared for the York Graduate Research School, to enable reflection. This would be presented at the URC Away Day or at the next meeting of the Committee.
3. The most effective form of review for research entities needed to be considered, in order to ensure entities were given the opportunity to assess and demonstrate value. The ARR reports would be used to update the list of research entities maintained by the PIP Team.

### **4. Proposal to revoke Regulation One on Higher Doctorates**

The Committee considered a proposal to revoke Regulation One on higher doctorates. The proposed change had previously been endorsed at the PGR Policies and Programmes Committee and the YGRS Board.

The Committee noted that the EDI implications of the nominations process for honorary doctorates needed to be considered.

**The Committee recommended to Senate that Regulation One on Higher Doctorates be revoked.**

### **5. Minor changes to Regulation Two**

The Committee considered proposed amendments to Regulation Two on Research Degree Awards. The Committee noted that the amendments were welcomed for those who conducted practice-based research.

**The Committee recommended to Senate that Regulation Two be amended as proposed**

### **6. Other Business**

1. Conversation continued regarding cuts to the Library. The importance of strategic thinking was noted, and it was agreed that an annual report should be requested from the Library to enable such discussion at URC. Further information would be available following the conclusion of negotiations with publishers in the autumn.
2. The Foreign Investment Regulation Scheme (FIRS) was highlighted, and the Committee noted that its requirements would become law from 1 July 2025. Non-compliance with the legislation had potential implications for researchers and as such understanding the requirements was essential. The key factor was determining whether the actions of researchers were directed by a foreign government.