

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Senate

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Matters for note by Senate arising from the meeting of Research Committee on 21 November 2024

1. Update on preparations for the REF

The Committee **received** an oral report on preparations for the REF. Analysis of responses to the REF Preparation Survey was ongoing. The People, Culture and Environment Pilot Exercise was expected to open shortly, and updates would be presented in due course.

Research England had issued a pre-notification of panel member nominations opening in December. The process would rely on self-nominations and the University encouraged individuals to take part.

2. Refreshing the statement on Research Performance Expectations

The Committee considered the proposed refresh of Research Performance Expectations. The Chair reported the following:

1. There had been significant change within the sector since the current Research Performance Expectations had been developed in 2019, and as such it was important to consider whether the Expectations remained in line with practice and standards across the sector.
2. It was suggested that a small group be identified to lead on this area and return in the new year with further proposals.

The Committee **observed** the following:

1. Updates to the Expectations should refer explicitly to the Research Strategy, linking with KPIs and key metrics, as well as research culture work. The working group should involve a representative from the Research Culture Working Group.
2. Updates to the Research Performance Expectations would be beneficial in light of updates to the promotions criteria. A review of the central Expectations would offer guidance to departments and prompt the thinking in this area.
3. Volunteers should express their interest to the Committee Secretary, including suggestions for other colleagues who may be willing to contribute.

3. Draft Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure

The Committee approved the draft Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure.

The Policy, Integrity and Performance Officer (Integrity) **reported** the following:

1. The Policy and Procedure had been updated in line with the requirements of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and had used as a base the UKRIO template for the investigation of misconduct in research. This was to ensure alignment and consistency across the sector.
2. The major changes were outlined, with the requirement for external members on Full Investigation Panels noted as the most impactful change. It was emphasised that the University had access to UKRIO resources, including a Subscriber Hub for the recruitment of external panel members.

The Committee **requested** that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) be considered.

4. University Research Data Management Infrastructure and Support

The Committee endorsed proposals regarding the University Research Data Management infrastructure and support plan. The work had taken place on behalf of the Open Research Strategy Group, and was intended to identify and fill gaps in current provision.

The Committee observed the following:

1. A further conversation was needed in order to ensure the right people were identified to take on the roles of Institutional Lead and Data Steward. In the case of the Data Steward role, this would be a

new role and so a full job description would be developed. It was important to foster a joined-up community within the University, to avoid simply reproducing current problems on a larger scale.

2. It was suggested that a template be developed to set expectations for the completion of Data Management Plans.
3. It was clarified that departments remained the main leaders in the area, but that this work had been intended to provide central guidance on the topic and a framework for best practice.

5. Annual Report on Open Research for 2023/2024

The Committee approved the Annual Report on Open Research for 2023/2024. The following was reported:

1. This was the fifth iteration of the Annual Report and the progress in regards to the Maturity Model was recognised. A range of colleagues had been involved in developing the report.
2. The recommendations were proposed with achievability in mind, considering the current workload faced by the institution. The suggested work was intended to take place in alignment with activity happening across the University.

The Committee observed the following:

1. It was requested that an Equality Impact Assessment be completed.
2. Funding sources would need to be considered for some of the recommendations listed. The Research Culture fund had been utilised in previous years, however further sources were needed.

6. Draft Commercial Costing and Pricing Policy

The Committee approved the draft Commercial Costing and Pricing Policy. The following was reported:

1. In order to meet institutional ambitions regarding industrial income, it was important to understand the scope of work taking place at the University. The draft Policy set out transparent costings and a minimum price, determined with reference to market rates, in order to support effective and affordable work.
2. The definitions used in the draft Policy were chosen in the interest of consistency, however it was recognised that such definitions were broad and varied across the sector. It was hoped that the draft Policy could enable a commonality of language within the institution. The focus of the Policy was commercial activity at scale.
3. A review would take place in nine months to assess the implementation of the Policy and highlight issues in need of resolution.

The Committee observed the following:

1. There was concern about the management of exceptions and the high number of these, especially from the Arts & Humanities. Although it was important to understand the cost associated with such work, it was emphasised that care should be taken to avoid damage to existing relationships. The non-monetary value of such work was also acknowledged.
2. Further work to understand the possible costs that could be set across varied areas of activity would need more resource and as such was not possible at this time.
3. Consideration was needed as to the ethical and EDI implications of the Policy, and it was **requested** that an EIA be completed.

7. Other Business

- (a) The Committee approved the minute summarising the approval via written correspondence of the Annual Statement on Research Integrity for 2023/2024.
- (b) Professor Paul Wakeling had been appointed as the Dean of the York Graduate Research School and would take up post on 2 January 2025. Professor Wakeling had a wealth of experience in widening participation, both internally and externally, and had been a key driver in the York Centre for Equity in Doctoral Education (YCEDE).
- (c) The University had hosted a visit from representatives of the civil service and the Committee noted the range of opportunities available relating to the government Industrial Strategy. It was important to

develop a consistent narrative across the institution to ensure alignment across areas of activity. It was suggested that this be achieved in part through the Annual Research Review (ARR).

- (d) A number of working groups were under development within RIKE to look at approaches to Governance and Compliance, Data provision, REF Operations and Fellowship Development. Work was also in progress to increase consistency across financial operations, including new approaches to Research Facility costing and commercial costing and the standardisation of terms used in financial reporting.
- (e) A more managed approach to grant submissions was under development, with the aim of minimising RIKE and Academic staff time and enabling earlier sight of requests for institutional financial commitment. As part of this, submission approvals would be altered with those over £1M and with institutional investment requiring sign-off by both PVC-R and Director of RIKE - the process for this will be widely publicised once confirmed.
- (f) Changes to line management within teams had been made in order to better structure teams and address the reduction in Faculty Operational Teams following VS, notably in the Faculty of Science. Overall reduction in faculty teams was around 16% of staff costs, meaning that the capacity of colleagues is reduced and workload increasing, while some key central resource had also reduced. The importance of supporting staff to manage their workload and prioritise their time was noted.
- (g) The interviews for the new Associate Director (Research Development) would take place on November 29th.

PROFESSOR MATTHIAS RUTH
20/12/2024

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