

# UNIVERSITY OF YORK

## Senate

### RESEARCH COMMITTEE

#### Matters for note by Senate arising from the meeting of Research Committee on 13 March 2024

#### 1. University Research Strategy: Key Performance Indicators

The Committee received an update on the development of KPIs for the University Research Strategy. Discussion at the recent UEB Away Day had involved rigorous discussion of the proposed KPIs and had resulted in the recommendation of three research-related KPIs, which were then approved by Council in February. The three approved were KPI 5 (Research Income per Academic FTE), KPI 6 (Research Outcomes) and KPI 7 (Research Environment).

Work would take place with the Research Information Reporting Group (RIRG) and Planning to develop targets and identify leading indicators prior to presenting more detailed proposals to URC on 1 May 2024. UEB had been receptive to the issues raised concerning the use of Field Weighted Citation Index (FWCI) and had strongly supported the prioritisation of the research environment under KPI 7.

#### 2. Amendments to the Terms of Reference to include PGR and ECR Representation

The Committee approved a minute summarising the approval via written resolution of amendments to the Terms of Reference to include PGR and ECR Representation. The PIP Office would continue to develop the proposal in line with comments received and would bring new Terms of Reference for approval in May.

The importance of maintaining Faculty and academic presence on the Committee was noted. It was clarified that the inclusion of Nominated Alternatives was intended to facilitate this, allowing for Faculty representation even when the Associate Dean(s) for Research were unavailable. The recent expansion of Faculty teams allowed for the inclusion when necessary of other representatives with all the requisite knowledge and experience.

#### 3. Research Leave and Semesterisation

The Committee endorsed the review of existing policies, guidance and practice in relation to research leave at the University. Following a shift to semesters at the University, the units of time accounted for in current research leave policy did not align with those currently used. Faculties were asked to review the policies and processes in place to ensure they remained fit for purpose. It was recognised that the work would take some time to complete; a rough delivery date of autumn 2024 was suggested.

It was recognised that nuance within fields and departments needed to be considered, and that one approach would not necessarily be suitable for all. The Committee suggested that a light-touch information gathering process would be appropriate in the first instance, for example through the ARR or FRGs.

The Committee noted that a defined cost-benefit analysis process would be helpful when approaching changes with far-reaching implications, such as semesterisation and modularisation. The new shape of the year would have ongoing consequences.

#### 4. Other Business

- a. Following discussion within faculties, led by Faculty Deans, the proposed changes regarding 3.5 Year PhD variants were approved. It was clarified that the YGRS approval requirement remained in place and would trigger appropriate communications to teams across the University. Blanket approval for placement variants was also given.
- b. Work continued on the governance structures in support of research entities, and PIP was undertaking a review of the paperwork for setting up, changing or closing down an entity. The policy would return to the Committee at the start of the next academic year for a post-implementation review.
- c. Responses to the Annual Research Review (ARR) had been submitted by departments and were currently being compiled for consideration by Faculty, prior to submission to the Committee later in the academic

year. The Committee and PIP would engage with the Strategic Planning process in advance of the 2024/25 exercise to ensure alignment with the 5-Year Forecast.

- d. A paper would be presented to the Committee in May regarding Corporate Social Responsibility, following discussion by the Committee in January and a series of Task and Finish group meetings to determine the values and boundaries guiding research at the University.
- e. The annual review of PGR matters had taken place and reflection on the Postgraduate Researcher Experience Survey (PRES) results was underway alongside preparation for the REF. The PIP Office had been notified of the outcomes, and concerns around the fee differential for overseas students versus home students were noted.
- f. It was important that PGR students were factored into departmental numbers planning and research strategies. Most departments aimed to maintain PGR numbers or improve the quality of PGRs recruited, and there were requests for a stronger undergraduate to postgraduate pipeline and more sharing of best practice. Work continued on recruitment and selection in alignment with YCEDE.
- g. The UKRI announcement on changes to doctoral funding had initiated further work within the institution and highlighted the need for strong processes to support applications for Focal Awards due to the short turnaround associated with these. Similarly a new expectations document developed by UKRI had led to conversations around wellbeing and mental health support, though it was noted that the University performed well against the expectations set out.
- h. The first meeting of the REF Strategy Group had taken place on 29 February 2024, with another to follow shortly. There was discussion underway regarding the most effective way to share REF Strategy Group material with URC.
- i. Concerns within Faculties regarding financial constraints and the subsequent impact of this on upcoming plannings were noted.
- j. The Committee requested further work to understand whether the support provided for Fellowships within the institution was in alignment with the sector as a whole, with a view to developing a more structured approach to the membership of Fellowship panels.

**PROFESSOR MATTHIAS RUTH**  
**16/04/24**

**MS ZOE DEACY-CLARKE**