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RESEARCH COMMITTEE: **Thursday 4th June 2020**

PRESENT: Professor A. Nagar (in the Chair), Professor N. Donnelly, Dr G. Cuthbertson, Dr S. Harrop, Professor D. Jeyaraj, Professor O. Khaiyat, Professor G. Mair.

By Invitation: Mr C. Cooper, Ms S. Murray.

Secretariat: Mr Marc Jones.

Apologies: Dr P. Bamber, Professor K. Newport, Dr D. Reid (examining a PhD thesis).

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members had received the minutes of the meeting of Research Committee held on 12th February (RE 956), which were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

The Chair confirmed that the actions listed in the action log would be dealt with later in the agenda.

3. Preparations for REF2021

Members had received draft minutes of the REF Steering Group (REFSG) meeting on 18th May 2020 (RE 957). The Chair informed members that some of the deadlines for REF2021 have been amended in light of the COVID-19 pandemic; discussions are currently underway in relation to rescheduling the submission deadline of 27th November 2020 to a point in the first quarter of 2021. The Chair informed members that the census date (31st July 2020) remains unchanged, as does the cut-off date for submission of impact and environment evidence (31st July 2020). The Chair informed members that provision may be made in impact and environment submissions for capture of information relating to the impact of COVID-19. The Chair assured members that the University remains well-prepared for REF2021, citing in particular the University's outputs.

4. Reports from Research Centres

a. CCDS

Members had received an update from CCDS (RE 958). Members noted the seminar entitled *The Role of Risk in Relation to Special Educational Needs and Disability*, given by Sharon Smith (University of Birmingham) which took place on 5th February 2020 as part of the Disability Futurity series organised by the CCDS in collaboration with Carleton University's Disability Research Group, Canada.

b. CEPA

Members had received an update from the Centre for Education and Policy Analysis (RE 959). Members noted that leading academics Professor Matthew Clayton (Warwick University) and Dr Sam Sellar (Reader in Education, MMU) were appointed as CEPA Visiting Professors this year based on the alignments of research interests and their expertise in research project formulation, grant pursuit and career mentoring from a mid-career perspective.

c. Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War & Peace Studies

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Members had received an update from the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War & Peace Studies (RE 960). Dr Cuthbertson informed members that with Centre Director Dr Montoya Londoño on maternity leave and the departure of Centre Deputy Director Dr McLoughlin, a new Acting Centre Director will need to be appointed. The Chair undertook to oversee this selection process.

d. Andrew Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity

Members had received an update from the Andrew F Walls Centre of the Study of African and Asian Christianity (RE 961). Professor Jeyaraj drew members' attention to the PGR World Christianity Colloquia for PGR and MA Students in African Christianity which took place (online) on 24th March and 28th May 2020.

e. SEARCH

Members had received an update from SEARCH (RE 962a). Dr Cuthbertson informed members that Professor Lavalette is now leading on the Everton In The Community collaboration, and has allocated funding for a number of projects, and two MRes scholarships. The Chair welcomed these developments and requested that SEARCH produce a paper detailing its current projects in relation to Everton In The Community.

5. Library Resources Update

a. Library Update

Members had received the Library Update (RE 963). The Chair drew members' attention to compliance issues in Law in relation to the open access requirement. Ms Murray informed members that she is in contact with the publisher of the journal in question in relation to this. Professor Donnelly asked Ms Murray to confirm that the publishing company Sage has adopted an Open Access agreement but that Elsevier has not. Ms Murray confirmed that this is currently the case. Ms Murray informed members that remote access to HIRA was now up and running.

6. Research Funding

a. Report on progress on research and grant income activity

Mr Cooper reported that external funding applications have continued to be made during the COVID-19 pandemic, adding that to date seven applications have been submitted for the British Academy's COVID-19 special research grants.

b. University Research Funding

The Chair informed members that he is currently assessing four applications for University research funding. The Chair added that he is currently considering the best ways in which Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and those returning to research from Teaching & Scholarship roles can be supported. Dr Cuthbertson asked whether, under the new Schools structure, applications for University research funding would be signed off by the Head of School or the chair of the School Research Committee. The Chair responded that such applications would be signed off by the Head of School.

7. Research Degrees Sub Committee

Members had received minutes of the Research Degrees Sub Committee of 21st May 2020 (RE 964). The Chair drew members' attention to the sub-committee's updated terms of reference, in particular to the section stating that the sub-committee would meet 'not more than three times

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per year'. The Chair informed members that annual monitoring of PGR is currently underway at partner institutions and assured members that the University's procedures are being adhered to. The Chair added that the University's partnership with Maryvale Institute is due to expire this summer and that an exit strategy to teach out the remaining students is currently being worked upon.

The Chair also drew members' attention to the section relating to the Confirmation of Doctoral Registration Process (PhD from MPhil), which replaces TRE process. The Chair informed members that the new process starts with a recommendation from the student's supervisor, rather than coming from the student. The Chair added that in their submission the supervisor is required to detail (i) The student's engagement with supervisory meetings and other required processes, and (ii) The progress made by the student during their MPhil studies, including thesis chapters produced and/or work of publishable quality. The Chair informed members that the panel would make a yes/no decision, with no reassessment opportunity available. Dr Harrop informed members that she had recently chaired the first panel to take place under the new regulations and that all had proceeded smoothly.

8. Research Ethics Sub Committee

Members had received minutes from the Research Ethics Sub-Committee of 11th December 2019 (RE 965).

In relation to the first action point from the February 2020 meeting of Research Committee (to appoint an external member for Research Ethics Sub Committee), The Chair informed members that he and Professor Jeyaraj continue to liaise with the Secretary's Office in relation to this. In relation to the second action point from the same meeting (clearance for text-based research) Professor Jeyaraj reiterated his suggestion that researchers using only text-based research could apply for an ethical clearance for the text-based aspects of their subject area for a period of one to three years. Professor Donnelly and Dr Cuthbertson voiced their support for the proposal. The Chair undertook to liaise with Professor Jeyaraj and Professor Shakespeare and produce a paper expanding on this proposal for the next meeting of Research Committee. Professor Donnelly raised a potential issue in relation to open access requirements and their bearing upon text-based research. Professor Jeyaraj undertook to raise this at the next meeting of Research Ethics Sub Committee. The Chair shared the ToRs for the School/Departmental Ethics Approval Committees formed within the new School structures in the University.

9. Reports from Faculty Research Committees

a. Terms of Reference and Membership of New School Committees

Members had received the terms of reference and membership of the new School Research Committees (RE966 & 967). The Chair informed members that each School Research Committee would provide an update to Research Committee at its termly meetings (rather than sending minutes as was previously the case with Faculty Research Committees).

b. Faculty of Science

The Committee had received minutes from the meeting of the Faculty of Science Research Committee of 26th February 2020 (RE 968).

10. Monitoring Strategic Goals:

The Chair requested that in advance of the next meeting each school and department prepare a report showing how their Research and Scholarship Development Plan accords with the University's strategic goals.

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11. AOB

Professor Donnelly raised the issue of Strategic Goals which fall across more than one of the new schools, emphasising the importance of ensuring that focus is maintained on such goals. Dr Cuthbertson concurred, adding that the University's Research Centres ought to maintain their cross-disciplinary nature under the new schools system, rather than becoming 'owned' by one school. The Chair confirmed that indeed that is the purpose of a Research Centres – these are University wide entities and not just a centre within a School/Dept.

The Chair asked members to join him in thanking Prof Mair, who is retiring at the end of this Academic Year, for his contributions to this committee. The Chair will now seek a nomination for a Social Sciences representative on the Research Committee in discussion with the VC (Chair of the University Senate).

ACTION LOG FOR NEXT RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Progress
External member for Research Ethics Sub Committee	Professor Nagar to liaise with Mr Dykins re this.	Professor Nagar	
Head of Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War & Peace Studies	Professor Nagar to oversee process for appointing new Centre Director	Professor Nagar	
SEARCH	Professor Lavalette to produce report detailing current projects with Everton In The Community	Professor Lavalette via the Social Sciences representative on the Research Committee	
Clearance for text-based research	Professor Nagar to liaise with Professors Jeyaraj and Shakespeare to produce report/proposal for next meeting.	Professor Nagar, Professor Jeyaraj	
Text-based research	Professor Jeyaraj to raise open access requirements and their bearing upon text-based research at next meeting of Research Ethics Sub Committee.	Professor Jeyaraj	
Monitoring Strategic Goals	Each school and department to prepare a report showing how their Research and Scholarship Development Plan accords with the University's strategic goals.	All members.	