

**CONFIRMED**



**RESEARCH COMMITTEE:**  
**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**PRESENT:** Professor A. Nagar (in the Chair), Dr M. Brennan, Dr G. Cuthbertson, Dr S. Harrop, Dr N. Hodgson, Professor D. Jeyaraj, Dr Z. Kinsley, Professor O. Khaiyat, Dr A. Ranasinghe, Dr D. Reid

**By Invitation:** Revd Dr T. Bradley, Ms C. Bramwell (Research admin support), Mr C. Cooper, Ms S. Murray.

**Secretariat:** Mr M. Jones.

**Apologies:** Professor N. Donnelly (meeting with VC)

The Chair welcomed Dr Michael Brennan to the Research Committee and advised that Dr Brennan has been nominated by the Vice-Chancellor to represent Social Sciences following the retirement of Professor George Mair.

The Chair also welcomed a further three new members to the Research Committee; Dr Zoe Kinsley, Dr Naomi Hodgson and Dr Anuradha Ranasinghe. The Chair confirmed that, notwithstanding the Senate membership rules, after the VC's approval the Senate co-opted three female Researchers from across the University in order to ensure a gender balance diversity and affine the female voice on research matters at this important Senate committee.

**1. Terms of Reference**

Members had received updated Terms of Reference and membership (RE 969). The Chair informed members that these were recently approved by Senate in June 2020.

**2. School Research and Ethics Committees**

Members had received Terms of Reference and proposed membership for School/Departmental Research Committees (RE 970 & RE 971) and Terms of Reference for School Research Ethics Approvals Committee (RE 972). The Chair explained the new Schools structure and how these school-based committees related to the Senate committee.

**3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Members had received the minutes of the meeting of Research Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (RE 973), which were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

**4. Matters Arising**

**External member for Research Ethics Sub Committee:** The Chair informed members that efforts to find an external member for the Research Ethics Sub Committee are ongoing. Members were advised that Mr Derrick Dykins has recently approached potential external members in the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and in the University of Greenwich and is awaiting a response.

The Chair requested that this item remain on the action log and also repeated his requests to members to propose suitable names of independent external member for the ethics sub-committee.

## CONFIRMED



**Head of Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War & Peace Studies:** Dr Cuthbertson informed members that Dr Al-Azami is Acting Director of the Desmond Tutu Centre for War & Peace Studies.

**SEARCH report on Everton in the Community:** The Chair confirmed that Professor Lavalette has produced the report, which has been sent to members.

**Text-based Research:** The Chair confirmed that these items would be dealt with later in the agenda.

### 5. Update on preparations for REF2021

Members had received the REF2021 update (RE 974) and unconfirmed minutes of the REF Steering Group (REFSG) meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (RE 975). The Chair informed members that activity on REF2021 was paused in March 2020 due to the pandemic and resumed on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. The Chair advised members that the revised REF submission deadline is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Professor Khaiyat reminded the Chair that he has made submissions to the current REF under two different names and asked whether this would present an issue. The Chair mentioned that this is an operational matter and that he will be happy to look at this outside this meeting. Prof Nagar shared a report regarding the University's preparation for REF 2021 submission and provided an update on Outputs data (which forms 60% of the submission) and informed that the data entry work for this part of the submission is progressing as planned. Prof Nagar emphasised the importance of the remaining 40% of the assessment which included Impact case studies (25%) and Environment narratives (15%). The peer-review of these case studies and narratives is underway and the Chair asked members to contribute to this work by sharing good practice from across our 13 units of assessments where the University is going to make the submission.

Dr Harrop raised concerns around the submission of practice based outputs in relation to Creative and Performing Arts. The Chair advised that we are waiting for the Funding Bodies to confirm how they will accept outputs of this nature and confirmed that once the guidelines are published, members will be informed immediately.

The Chair reassured members that colleagues across the University are well prepared for the REF submission and advised that hard copies of book chapters and monographs will be collated for sending out.

### 6. Reports from Research Centres

#### a. CCDS

Members had received an update from CCDS (RE 976). Members noted the recent publication of the 40<sup>th</sup> issue of the Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies. Based on a CCDS seminar series, the special issue was entitled *Disability and the Emotions*.

#### b. CEPA

Members had received an update from the Centre for Education and Policy Analysis (RE 977). Dr Hodgson introduced herself to fellow members as a member of the CEPA steering group and informed members that Dr Sampson-Chappell is now Co-Director of the centre. Dr Hodgson added that the centre has recently appointed two additional visiting scholars. Dr Hodgson drew members' attention to the centre's research seminar series, which has taken place online due to the pandemic. Dr Hodgson added that this mode of delivery had resulted in an increase in engagement with the series.

**c. Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War & Peace Studies**

Members had received an update from the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War & Peace Studies (RE 978). Members noted that the centre's conference on 'Environment and Conflict', which was planned for last academic year but cancelled due to the pandemic, has been rescheduled for June 2021. The event will be online and open internationally and a detailed plan of the conference and call for papers will be finalised before the Christmas break.

**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 979). Professor Jeyaraj drew members' attention to the monthly colloquia for PGR students, organised by Dr. Harvey Kwiyai. The series will be opened by Professor Andrew Walls on 29th October 2020 with his lecture *An Age of Theological Expansion: African and Asian Christianity as Theological Laboratories*.

**e. SEARCH**

Members had received updates on SEARCH and Everton in the Community (RE 980a & RE 980b). Revd Dr Bradley introduced himself to members as the new Centre Director of SEARCH and informed members that the centre's name has been amended to: Social Economic Action Research Centre at Hope. Revd Dr Bradley emphasised that the centre is looking to collaborate with colleagues from schools across the University and added that a SEARCH Steering Group and an Advisory Board have been established.

The Chair emphasised the importance of profiling these Centres well and advised that colleagues should be finding opportunities for interdisciplinary work with colleagues from across the University. The Chair advised that later in the academic year he would like to hear each Centre's strategy on how the work they are doing can be diversified and enhanced.

**7. Library Resources Update****a. Library Update**

Members had received the Library Update (RE 981) and minutes of the meeting of Library Steering Group which took place on 7<sup>th</sup> October (RE 982). Ms Murray drew members' attention towards the section of the update relating to Read & Publish informing them that a number of publishers are moving to Read & Publish agreements which enhances the University's subscriptions with them by enabling free 'green' Open Access publication of an article. Ms Murray informed members that the University has this set up with Sage and is currently working with Wiley and Cambridge University Press and investigation an arrangement for PLoS journal publishers. Dr Cuthbertson asked Ms Murray whether it would be possible to have library purchases, paid for at schools level, delivered directly to colleagues at their home address, due to the current climate in which a large number of colleagues are working from home. Ms Murray undertook to look into this with the Acquisitions Librarian.

Ms Murray informed members that Ms Backhouse is currently on campus one day per week in order to facilitate access to the library's Special Collections (by appointment).

## **8. Research Funding**

### **a. Report on progress on research and grant income activity**

Members had received the update on funding applications (RE 984). Mr Cooper noted that the number of applications made has decreased but attributed this to activity in advance of the REF2021 deadline. Mr Cooper drew members' attention to the report showing levels of application activity across the University's schools and departments (RE 983) and undertook to forward the report to School Research Committees. Mr Cooper requested that Chairs of School Research Committees invite him to their meetings to discuss research funding applications. The Chair asked Mr Jones to contact School Research Committee Chairs re this.

Mr Cooper suggested adding information to the regular update on funding applications to show which bids were successful and which were unsuccessful and undertook to discuss this with Finance.

### **b. University Research Funding (External and Internal)**

Members had received the paper on allocation of research funds to School Research Committees (RE 985). The Chair informed members that in setting the research budgets for 2020/21, the VC has asked that 40% (£48k) of the total research budget be devolved to the School/Department Research Committees. The Chair drew members attention to the principles being used to devolve the distribution of funding, in particular the notion that as funding bodies do not fund anything which is 2\* and below the University is not funding/devolving funds for 2\* and below activities. The Chair added that the University has placed equal weight on 3\* and 4\* research. Dr Hodgson raised the issue of funding allocation in relation to colleagues in Disability Studies, which formerly sat in Education and now sits in Social Sciences. The Chair undertook to investigate this matter and re-model the data to see what this means and if there is a possible resolution.

### **c. Teaching Buyout Policy**

Members had received the paper detailing the teaching buyout policy (RE 986). The Chair explained that The term 'buyout' refers to the practice of using external funding from external research grants (e.g. UKRI, AHRC, EPSRC, Leverhulme, etc), consultancies and similar activities to release academic staff (on Teaching and Research contracts who are considered as having Significant Responsibility for Research (SSR) in REF terms) from some of their teaching or other duties, so that they can fulfil externally-funded research commitments.

The Chair requested that members share the paper with colleagues in their schools and departments and also reminded members that this document is more indicative and should be seen as guidance. The Chair advised members that if they required any further information they should contact himself or Mr Cooper.

## **9. Research Degrees Sub-Committee**

Members had received minutes of the Research Degrees Sub Committee of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (RE 987). The Chair reminded members that the 2019/20 Annual Monitoring process had not examined the full academic year, due to the pandemic; the process had examined the academic year up to the end of March 2020. The Chair informed members that a substantial number of PGR students, both at Liverpool Hope and partner institutions, had requested to interrupt their studies, adding that such requests were dealt with on a case by case basis. The Chair drew members' attention to the ARE reports received from partner institutions. The Chair drew members' attention to the Sub-Committee's discussion of disruption to a number of PGR

## CONFIRMED



students at Creative Campus due to staffing changes. The Chair informed members that work is under way to refine procedures so that PGR students are only recruited in areas where the University has an established area of research and a critical mass of staff expertise. The Chair also informed that he is in the process of updating the PGR Handbook (a very good draft is already available) and with the Registrar's help PGR Code of Practice and Regulations are being updated including the entry requirements for professional doctorates to bring these in line with PhDs.

### 10. Research Ethics Sub-Committee

#### Minutes of Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Members had received minutes from the Research Ethics Sub-Committee of 29th September 2020 (RE 988). Professor Jeyaraj drew members' attention towards the Sub-Committee's discussion on Ethical Clearance for Text-Based Research. Professor Jeyaraj informed members that colleagues in the Arts & Humanities had requested a system whereby ethical clearance for text-based research is granted on a graded basis for specific areas. Professor Jeyaraj added that the Research Ethics Sub-Committee's recommendation is that Level H students be granted clearance for one year, MA students for two years and PhD students for three years. Dr Reid raised a concern that such text-based clearance could potentially be misused in the field of Computing, in relation to code. Professor Jeyaraj assured Dr Reid that the proposed clearance will be exclusively available to students in the Arts & Humanities. Dr Reid asked whether the proposed clearance included work in virtual reality and augmented reality. Professor Jeyaraj asked Dr Reid to contact him in writing re this issue. As a result of the necessary restrictions in place due to Covid-19, members discussed how the undergraduate research projects may be conducted safely. Many students may have planned physical empirical data collection that is now no longer feasible. It was agreed that their supervisor should be able to advise on the most appropriate methodology to employ to answer the students' research questions given the current circumstances. While physical face to face data collection may not be feasible, there are a number of potential options to enable empirical data collection by the student, Members agreed at as a result of Covid-19 adjustments being made students can be allowed to use internet/social media platforms to conduct interviews and data entry where in person interviews may not be possible.

### 11. Items for Note from School Research Committees

Members had received the item for note from the Creative and Performing Arts Research Committee (RE991).

Dr Hodgson asked whether School Research Committees are required to have a PGR Representative on them. The Chair advised that they do not as standard but if there were any specific items then a PGR rep could be invited as required.

The Chair asked that Schools/Departments be prepared to present their Annual Monitoring plans at the next meeting of Research Committee.

### 12. Monitoring Strategic Goals:

The Chair advised that the Research and Scholarship Development Plan will be updated soon after the REF submission.

Members had received the University's Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) submission narrative (RE 992). The Chair thanked Mr McKenna for his work on this and informed member that the University's KEF submission has now been made. The Chair also informed members

## CONFIRMED



that the University will start planning KE strategy and that he has been looking into the recently published KE concordat document.

Members had received the University's Research Integrity Statement (RE 993) and Public Engagement and NCCPE Manifesto (RE 994). The Chair drew members' attention to the Research Integrity statement and asked members to send any feedback on these documents to him by the end of the week.

### 13. AOB

Professor Khaiyat raised the issue of academics maintaining their research profiles during the pandemic. The Chair noted that a number of conferences have moved their proceedings online, adding that this has resulted in no travel costs to the University and frequently lower conference registration fees. The Chair also reminded members that School Research Committees and Heads should support research in a fair and transparent manner from the budgets allocated to the SRCs and advised that funds can also be used to support staff development research related activities.

### 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	
Home delivery of library orders.	Ms Murray to discuss with Acquisitions Librarian	Ms Murray	
Report on application activities across schools and departments.	Mr Cooper to forward to Schools Research Committees	Mr Cooper	
Addition of data to funding applications report showing which applications were successful.	Mr Cooper to discuss with Finance	Mr Cooper	
Mr Cooper to attend School Research Committee	Mr Jones to contact committee Chairs	Mr Jones	
Funding allocation in light of Disability Studies move from Education to Social Sciences	Professor Nagar to discuss with VC	Professor Nagar	
Ethical clearance for text-based research.	Dr Reid to contact Professor Jeyaraj about how this clearance relates to virtual reality and augmented reality.	Dr Reid	