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RESEARCH COMMITTEE: Wednesday 1st November 2017

PRESENT: Revd Professor K. Newport (Chair), Dr P. Bamber, Dr D. Bolt, Mr C. Cooper, Dr A. Ghalib, Dr Z Kinsley, Ms S. Murray, Professor A. Nagar, Professor N. Rees, Dr D. Reid, Dr C. Wakefield, Dr Z. Zontou

Apologies: Prof D. Jeyaraj

Secretariat: Mr M. Jones

1) Apologies & Welcome

The Chair noted the apologies of Professor Jeyaraj.

2) Minutes of the previous meeting

Members had received the minutes of the meeting of Research Committee held on 17th May 2017 (**RE 784**), which were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

3) Matters Arising

REF Timeline

Professor Nagar confirmed that the REF timeline document had been distributed to members.

Proposal for DMin

Professor Nagar confirmed that the proposal for DMin had been discussed at the 11th October meeting of Research Degrees Sub-Committee. Professor McGrail is currently in contact with colleagues from St Mary's University with regard to this.

4) Terms of Reference

Members had received the Committee's Terms of Reference, for recommendation for approval by Senate. The Terms of Reference were **RECOMMENDED** for approval by Senate.

5) Preparations for REF 2021

(i) Minutes of REF Steering Group

Members had received minutes of the REF Steering Group (RE 786a) and as Chair of the REFSG Prof Nagar confirmed that the Terms of Reference of the REFSG were confirmed at the last meeting and noted the discussions he has been having with the UoA coordinators. Prof Nagar also noted from the minutes that the University's response to the HEFCE's second consultation on REF and the survey of pool of staff was submitted on time.

(ii) Update on Stern Report

Members had received Professor Nagar's progress report on preparations for REF 2021 (RE 786).

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Professor Nagar informed members that the Stern Report published by HEFCE in September 2017 includes key initial decisions regarding UOA structure, institution-level assessment and assessment weightings, however, there are a number of aspects of the next REF which are unknown at this stage and there are some big gaps. Professor Nagar informed members that the assessment weightings for REF 2021 will be: outputs: 60% (down from 65% in REF 2014), impact 25% (up from 20% in REF 2014) and environment 15% (same as in REF 2014 but now includes impact strategy). Prof Nagar informed that his summary of the initial decisions on Lord Stern's review of REF (including a table showing key dates) has been widely circulated in the University.

Exact details on a number of aspects of REF 2021 will be published in Autumn 2017/early 2018 along with further decisions on the arrangements for submitting staff, eligibility of staff and number of outputs per staff members as well as number of case studies per UoA that will be required for submission. However, it has been suggested that all staff "with a significant responsibility to undertake research" will be required to be submitted, but "no single indicator identifies those within the scope of the exercise". Institutions will have the option of submitting 100% of staff who meet the core eligibility requirement or come up with a code of practice that they'll use to decide who is eligible. Audit-able evidence will be required and Institutions can choose different options for different UoAs. The core eligibility requirements stipulate that staff must "have an academic employment function of 'research only' or 'teaching and research', are independent researchers (i.e. not research assistants unless 'demonstrably' independent), and hold minimum employment of 0.2 full time equivalent with a substantive connection to the submitting institution."

(iii) Units of Assessment

Professor Nagar informed members that the total number of Units of Assessment (UOA) has been reduced from 36 to 34. REF 2014 UOA 17 has been split to form UOA 14: Geography and Environmental Studies and UOA 15: Archaeology. Also, 'Film and Screen Studies' will be located and included in the name of UOA 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies. Professor Nagar added that each sub-panel will have at least one appointed member to oversee and participate in the assessment of interdisciplinary research submitted in that UOA. Professor Nagar added that there will be a new 'flag' in the system to highlight interdisciplinary research.

In terms of 'REF-readiness', Professor Nagar drew members' attention to the table on pp 8-10 of his report, informing them that 54.59% of the University's relevant staff are 'REF-ready', with a further 27.51% on course to become 'REF-ready', giving a total of 82.10% of eligible staff who will be submissible for next REF. Looking at the figures on a faculty-by-faculty basis, Professor Nagar informed members that over 85% of Arts & Humanities relevant staff are 'REF-ready' or approaching that state, while 70.73% of the Education's relevant staff are 'REF-ready' or approaching that state, and over 82% of Science's relevant staff are 'REF-ready' or approaching that state.

Professor Nagar noted that English Language is still awaiting the appointment of an external adviser. Dr Kinsley and Professor Rees replied that an adviser has been identified and approached and that the University is awaiting their response.

Professor Nagar drew members' attention to the tables relating to PGR data (pp 11-13), adding that doctoral students from Liverpool Hope and Maryvale Institute are eligible for inclusion in the submission but not those from St Mary's University or Newman University, both of whom have their own REF submissions. Prof Nagar emphasised the

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importance of timely successful completion of PhDs as this metric is important part of the Environment narrative for REF.

(iv) Impact

Professor Nagar informed members that impact which took place between 1st August 2013 and 31st July 2020 will be eligible for submission. As in REF 2014, the underpinning body of research work should be “at least equivalent to 2*” and published between 1st Jan 2000 and 31st Dec 2020. There will be a new more structured impact case study template, with more questions asked, more directed, more standardised, and more “prefatory” material will be required to make assessment easier by the Panels. The case studies will continue to be assessed for significance and reach of the impact. Case studies submitted to REF 2014 can be resubmitted to REF 2021, providing they meet the REF 2021 eligibility requirements. Professor Nagar emphasised that, in terms of REF, ‘impact’ can be said to have taken place when there is a tangible benefit for someone outside of academia and can often be an ongoing process. Prof Nagar also emphasised that capturing of the evidence of impact and how this impact has been achieved is crucially important for building impact case studies.

Professor Nagar informed members that there was potential for the University’s work funded by *Everton in The Community* to be used as an impact case study, but that the department to which the funding is allocated would need to be sure of inclusion in the REF submission.

Professor Nagar informed members that he has launched the next call for impact funding and applications are invited for funding (from HEIF) to support development of REF-Research Impact Case Studies. This call for funding is named ‘REFocus’ and its aim is to support focused activities which develop research impact and underpin strong impact case studies for the next research excellence framework (REF 2021). Funds will be awarded in the form of grants on a sliding scale from £500 to £3,000 (i.e. each application should be of value no more than £3,000).

It is an essential requirement that at the end of the completion of the grant the applicant will (1) be required to populate their case study on The Hope Impact Software System; (2) must provide a brief written report; and (3) present their impact case study to a REF strategy panel (colleagues from across the University will be invited) to help mainstream research impact in the University and share experience.

The cut-off date for this round of call for funding is Friday 8th December 2017 and applications will be reviewed (and decision given) as and when the applications are received.

Prof Nagar presented an update on progress with Impact case studies in the University and noted that some UoAs are much more advanced than others in their preparations for the impact case studies. He also asked Faculties to encourage their staff to attend one of the Impact Workshops that he has been organising as it is important that colleagues understand the difference between impact and dissemination of research. Dissemination at academic conferences can be an aspect of the case study but not impact itself.

(v) Outputs

Professor Nagar informed members that consultation re portability of outputs recently closed and two possible models have been proposed: (a). an output is eligible for inclusion by the relevant person’s current university as well as the one at which they were previously employed, or (b). a deadline date will be set, after which outputs will

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only be considered eligible for inclusion by the relevant person's current university. Professor Nagar added that no decision has yet been reached on how many outputs per FTE will be required and informed that in the next REF there will be an option of submitting an insurance (reserve) publication in case one of the in-press ones doesn't appear by close of play.

(vi) Environment

Professor Nagar informed members that the Environment element of REF 2021 will have a new section looking at each UOA's approach to open research, including the UOA's open access strategy. The Environment template will be much more structured to include sections on interdisciplinary research, UoA's approach to supporting collaboration with "organisations beyond higher education", a section on Impact strategy, and a section on how the UoA supports equality and diversity. There is also a suggestion for using more quantitative data in UoA environment template details of which we don't know yet but will guidance on this will be published in December/January.

Institution-level information will be included in the UOA-level environment template, assessed by the relevant sub-panel. HEFCE will pilot the standalone assessment of institution-level environment information as part of REF 2021, but this will not form part of the REF 2021 assessment. The outcomes will inform post-REF 2021 assessment exercises. Professor Nagar also presented a report on PGR numbers and Research income data which form part of the Environment narratives.

6) Reports from Research Centres

a. **CCDS**

Members had received an update from the Centre for Culture and Disability Studies (RE 787). Dr Bolt informed members the centre's fourth major biennial CCDS event took place in July 2017 and was attended by more than 100 delegates from around the world. Dr Bolt added that a new seminar series 'Disability and the Emotions' started on 4th October 2017 and will run until July 2018.

b. **CEPA**

Members had received an update from the Centre for Education and Policy Analysis (RE 788). Dr Bamber informed members that Professor Ron Barrett is in the process of being appointed a Visiting Professor at the Centre.

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 789). Professor Rees praised the centre's work with particular reference to its events programme and publications output.

d. **Andrew F Walls Centre of 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 790).

e. **SEARCH**

Members had received an update from SEARCH (RE 791). Dr Ghalib provided progress reports on ten projects currently being undertaken by the centre.

7) Library Resources Update

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a. Minutes of Library Steering Group

The Committee had received minutes of the Library Steering Group (RE 792). Ms Murray drew members' attention to Item 3 (ii) (Staff Inter Library Loans), pointing out the continuation of free inter-library loans for staff.

b. Library update

Members had received the Library update (RE 793). Ms Murray confirmed that all of the existing online resources for research have been renewed, and the University's subscription to Sage Research Methods reinstated. Ms Murray also confirmed that the University now has subscriptions to online newspapers via Gale, which includes Gale Literary Sources, Archives Unbound and Gale Virtual Reference Library. Ms Murray informed members that a volunteer has started work on de-duplicating and sorting the Talbot Collection, and that Judge David Lynch has donated his collection relating to film (consisting of books, dvds and annuals) to the University.

The Chair requested an update re the Methodist Missionary Society Mirofiche collection and Ms Murray confirmed that a draft agreement has been sent to the Methodist Church and the University is currently awaiting their response.

8) Research Funding

a. Research Funding

(i) External Funding Bids update

Mr Cooper informed members that the current number of external funding bids is slightly lower than at the same point last year, but that he does not foresee this situation continuing.

Dr Kinsley raised an issue brought to her by Dr Stuart-Buttle on behalf of the Centre for Christian Education relating to the centre's future status when funding from the Jerusalem Trust expires. The Chair undertook to discuss this with Professor Rees.

9) Sub Committee reports

a. Research Degrees Sub Committee

Members had received minutes of October's meetings of Research Degrees Sub Committee (RE 795 & 796). Professor Nagar drew members' attention towards the sub-committee's oversight of ARE reports from the University and partner institutions. Prof Nagar gave assurance to the committee that our relationship with partner HEIs for PGR is developing well and the numbers are looking stable. The admissions processes for all locations have been rigorous and he drew attention of the committee to minimal number of cases of appeals (only one during 2016/17 at the admissions/offer stage). Professor Nagar also drew attention to Item 14 in the minutes of the 11th October meeting ('Posthumous and Aegrotat Research Degrees'), informing members that the sub-committee had recommended the draft regulations for approval by Research Committee. **Accordingly, the committee RECOMMENDED the draft regulations for approval by Senate.**

b. Research Ethics Sub Committee

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Members had received minutes from Research Ethics Sub-Committee (RE 799). Professor Nagar informed members that the online research ethics approval system is now operational for UG students and that similar systems for PGR and staff will be operational in the near future.

10) Reports from Faculty Research Committees

a. **Science**

The Committee had received minutes from the recent meeting of the Faculty of Science Research Committee (RE 800).

b. **Arts & Humanities**

The Committee had received minutes from the recent meetings of the Faculty of Arts & Humanities Research Committee (RE 801).

c. **Education**

The Committee had received minutes from the recent meetings of the Faculty of Education Research Committee (RE 802 & 803). Dr Bamber requested that one of the University's Learning and Teaching Days be converted into a Research Day, to be held at faculty level. The Chair undertook to raise this at Senate.

11) Monitoring Strategic goals

Members had received paper outlining the operational framework for strategic goals and Research Committee's responsibility for monitoring them (RE 804). The Chair emphasised the importance of this remaining a standing item on Research Committee agendas.

ACTION LOG

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Progress
Internal research funding	Chair to draft and circulate a proposal on how best to process internal research funding requests	Professor Newport	Completed
Membership	Dr Kinsley to be added to the committee distribution list	Mr Jones	Completed
Athena SWAN bid	Ms Murray to discuss with Ms Lewin whether papers written by library staff, if uploaded to the University's research repository, could count towards the University's Athena SWAN bid.	Ms Murray	Completed
Responsibility for PGR students at Maryvale Institute	The Chair to seek clarity re the provision of assurance regarding the standard of the University's awards	Professor Newport	Completed

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	and the quality of its learning experience.		
Central budget for internal research funding	The Chair to draft a proposal requesting additional funds for the central internal research budget.	Professor Newport	Completed
SEARCH update report	Colleagues from SEARCH to submit an update report to the next meeting of Research Committee.	Professor Vandewalle	Completed
REF timeline	Professor Nagar to distribute REF timeline document to members.	Professor Nagar, Mr Jones	Completed
Proposal for DMin	RDSC to consider proposal at next meeting.	Professor Nagar	Completed
Centre for Christian Education	Professor Newport to discuss future funding of the centre with Professor Rees.	Professor Newport, Professor Rees	
University Research Day	Professor Newport to raise possibility of converting one of the University's Learning & Teaching Days into a Research Day.	Professor Newport	