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University Research Committee (URC)

Minutes

date: 23 May 2014
time: 09:30 am
location: G5.05 - High Wycombe Campus

14.13 Welcome / Apologies for absence

The Chair thanked the outgoing SU representative and welcomed the incoming representative to the Committee. The PVC (S&H) attended as an observer.

Three apologies for absence were received and noted separately.

14.14 Minutes of meetings held on 28 February 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2014 were accepted as an accurate record.

14.15 Matters arising [Action Sheet]

Updates to the Action Sheet were noted as follows:

Minute 14.04a – A representative from Marketing & Student Recruitment had been invited to the next meeting of the University Research Committee.

Minutes 14.05.01-03 – A meeting had been arranged in June 2014 to progress the reports and activities relating to the Research Institutes and Centres.

Minute 14.07 – A Working Group had convened to review recording and coding of project data. The first meeting was reported to be very constructive, although some challenges still remained.

Minute 14.08 – Arrangements had been made for flexible use of the desks in the Research Office, HW. The room was reported to well utilised.

Minute 14.09 – A successful Bitesize session for both PSEs and academics had taken place.

Minute 14.10 – The presentation of the new Knowledge Archive was on the agenda.

14.16 Bucks Knowledge Archive migration

A representative from Learning Resources gave a demonstration of the new Bucks Knowledge Archive following its migration to CREST servers.

The following points were noted:

- There were currently 1143 items on the archive of which 25-30% were full text.
- Papers, images, research datasets etc could be loaded on to the system either directly by individuals or via Learning Resources.
- Publisher copyright policies could be viewed on SHERPA/RoMEO and all entries would be checked by Learning Resources.
- Any third party elements such as photographic images, contributions by external authors etc were the responsibility of the individual authors at Bucks.
- Relevant plugins and statistical monitoring services including Google Analytics had been set up.
- IRIS statistics could be sent to individual authors.
- All relevant external agencies, including EThOS, would be informed of the change of server/platform.
- Data harvesting into LibrarySearch would be established.
- Possible links with the Electronic Furniture Archive were also being explored

The Learning Resources representative concluded that further sessions were currently being arranged to demonstrate the features of the new software and to explain what individuals needed to do to deposit items.

14.17 University Research Strategy – proposal for taking forward

The Chair presented the second draft of the Research and Scholarship strategy.

A number of points were raised in discussion.

The extent to which specific goals about REF should be included was discussed. It was considered that the focus within UOAs, ie the research clusters, was of particular importance and that there should be alignment of goals and action plans across RDAP and REF. A list of RDAP targets would be incorporated into PDRs, and it was recognised that in order to achieve RDAP, the full support of Heads of Schools and Academic Departments would be required.

The first notional view of UOAs for the next REF submission and alignments of Institutes/research groupings would be reported to the URC in November.

Action: Chair of RDC & Professor of Clinical Nursing Innovation

It was suggested that most goals were internally facing and that pathways to external impact could be incorporated into them.

Action: Chair of RDC & Professor of Social Policy & Community Engagement

The goals on external partners and collaborative activities could be rephrased.

Action: Professor of Clinical Nursing Innovation & Professor of Art History and Visual Culture

An explicit programme of staff development and support for all stages of involvement with research and scholarship will be developed to feed into PDRs to include input from HR. This 'ladder' into research would be built to enable all academics to have targets that are attainable and achievable.

Action: Director of Learning & Teaching, Professor of Art History and Visual Culture, Professor of Clinical Nursing Innovation, Head of Research (DMM), Principal Registrar, Senior Registrar (Research)

It was noted that embedding the strategy into academic practice would be established through a cycle of school discussions feeding into PDRs and back to the University Research Committee, reporting at all levels.

Goals 5 & 6 could be reframed to incorporate a constructive approach to developing the research infrastructure.

Action: Chair to liaise with PVC (S&H)

Two strands of seedcorn funding were currently available to academics for curriculum development and PhD studentships. Further income needed to be generated to enable other forms of support such as sabbaticals. A suggested model using currently available resource was proposed which would be forwarded to the Chair

Action: Professor of Art History and Visual Culture

The Students Union representatives indicated that there was an absence of student engagement from the strategy and that within the student population there was a lack of awareness of research activities. It was suggested that students could have a greater role as partners and it was recognised that the model of student internships was already operating in some parts of the University. A greater alignment of taught postgraduate and Masters by Research courses feeding into research degrees would be incorporated into the action plan to achieve a holistic approach.

Action: Chair

It was agreed that any comments on the current document should be sent to the Chair by the end of May.

The revised Strategy would go to Senate in June to commence September 2014. The Strategy would be reviewed annually alongside the Action Plan and would be a 'living' document.

14.18 Proposal for initial REF2020 Units of Assessment and Open Access Publication

The University's approach to HEFCE's policy for open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework was discussed. The policy states that, to be eligible for submission to the post-2014 REF, authors' final peer-reviewed manuscripts must have been deposited in an institutional or subject repository on acceptance for publication. The requirement applies to journal articles and conference proceedings with an ISSN.

A process was needed to ensure that the University complied with the policy. This would be brought to the November meeting.

Action: Principal Registrar & Senior Registrar (Research)

14.19 PhD studentships – competitive process (Paper URC14.9)

The University had agreed to fund 5 PhD studentships per year. An application form for supervisors to apply for studentships in their discipline was proposed. Supervisors would be encouraged to apply in areas where they could demonstrate:

- A link with one of the University's proposed REF UOAs
- The contribution of the research to curriculum development and why this aspect was important; and
- How the studentship would help to build external links.

In order for a studentship to be approved, there would need to be a critical mass of supervisory expertise in the area. The studentships were designed to strengthen the alignment between research, curriculum and partnerships and would consist of a bursary and fee waiver.

The timescale for the process was agreed as follows:

- A call for expressions of interest would be circulated to academics by the Chair. These should be directed to the Research Unit by end June 2014.
Action: Chair
- An analysis of the expressions of interest by a sub group of the Committee would be undertaken to agree the areas of focus (July 2014).
Action: Chair
- Following the review, targeted areas would be asked to complete the proposed form by September 2014.
- A formal review of the applications would be undertaken in the last two weeks of September.
Action: Chair
- Studentships would be advertised in October with a view to commencing studies 1 April 2015

14.20 Research Data Management Policy (Paper URC 14.10)

A proposal to develop a Research Data Management Policy was presented to the Committee. This should satisfy a number of requirements:

- To meet funding body requirements
- To maintain research integrity
- To meet legal requirements
- Enhance data security
- Increase efficiency

It was agreed that this was another requirement towards improving the research infrastructure in the University and was important to take forward. Input would be required from IT and Estates.

The Research Unit was requested to develop an outline policy which could be brought to the next meeting.

Action: Senior Registrar (Research)

14.21 Report from Research Degrees Committee (Paper URC 14.11)

The report from the Research Degrees Committee was noted. The following aspects were highlighted:

Brunel University would be conducting a quality review of provision for the remaining Brunel-registered research students. RDC members recognised the benefits of the review, however the initial audit visit date left a very short timescale to complete a considered Self Evaluation document. The Chair of the Sub-Committee for Postgraduate Research Degrees at Brunel University has agreed to delay the visit with a final date, probably in September, to be agreed.

Members of the RDC had agreed to seek approval from Coventry University to recruit to the titles MAR (MA by Research) and MScR (MSc by research).

A new Research Admissions Process was agreed with 4 intakes a year. A two-stage process was agreed:

- Review by Admissions Panel chaired by the chair of RDC
- Interview panel – to be conducted as the current process

The role of Research Student Tutor (RST) would be re-introduced from September 2014, with tutors for DMM, S&H and Professional Doctoral students. The RST would

have a principally pastoral role.

14.22 Report from University Ethics Panel (Paper 14.12)

The report from the University Ethics Panel was noted. The following aspects were highlighted:

Meeting dates for the next academic year had been proposed on both Thursdays and Fridays to enable more people on the Panel to attend some meetings, creating wider representation and thereby wider awareness across the University.

Ethics-Sub-Committees were being set up in all departments/schools to assess ethical implications of all undergraduate and Master's research projects (levels 6 and 7). Some departments have yet to submit details of their arrangements to the UEP.

Two proposals had recently been received that were outside of the UEP's usual remit. One was from a student who proposed to conduct a study for personal interest outside of her course work. The other instance was a contract researcher who also wished to conduct a study for personal interest. The University Research Committee advised that independent research could not be resourced by the University and in future should not be received for ethical approval by the UEP.

14.23 AOB

There was no other business

14.24 Date of next meeting: 21 November 2014

Prepared by: Minute Secretary

File location: S:/AQ/Committees/Research Committees/University Research Committee/ 2013-2014/Minutes