

APPROVED

The University of Manchester

Senate

Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Research)

24 January 2024

Present: Professor Colette Fagan (Chair), Professor Philippa Browning, Professor Richard Curry, Professor Stephen Flint, Professor Nigel Hooper, Professor David Matthews, Professor Mahesan Nirmalan, Professor James Pattison, Professor Thomas Schmidt, Professor Chris Taylor, and Professor Melissa Westwood.

In Attendance for all items: Dr Julian Skyrme (Director of Social Responsibility), Dr Andrew Walsh (Director of Research and Business Engagement Services), and Jane Holland (minutes).

Apologies: Professor Maggie Gale, Professor Arpana Verma, and Professor Richard Winpenny.

1 Declarations of Interest

Noted: That there were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Agreed: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2023.

3 Matters Arising

Noted:

- a) the Matters Arising update;
- b) the Director of Research and Business Engagement Services confirmed that support for academic staff applying for funding through Innovate UK was an area under consideration as part of a planning exercise intended to align Professional Services support with the academic plan for research income growth. An update on plans for supporting income growth would be added to the forward agenda for the October 2024 meeting; **Action: Governance Manager**
- c) the Vice-President for Research provided clarification of the categorisations within the Research Compliance Committee (RCC) Annual Report. There were two different RAG rated items; level of compliance and adverse events. The key to adverse events was:
Green – No minor or major adverse events as defined below.
Amber – Minor Adverse Events only – Minor deviation from protocol or good practice or an unforeseen event relating directly to the research leading to minor harm or risk of harm to research subjects (human or animal), researchers' reputation, and/or damage to premises/facilities/equipment, with no serious disruption to activities.
Red – Major Adverse Event(s) – Significant deviation from protocol or good practice, or unforeseen event relating directly to the research leading to significant harm or risk of harm to research subjects (human or animal), researchers reputation, and/or significant damage to premises/facilities/equipment with serious disruption to activities.

The chemical rating was rated amber by the RCC because there was no 'significant harm or risk of harm to research subjects (human or animal), researchers reputation, and/or significant damage to premises/facilities/equipment with serious disruption to activities'. The situation had been taken seriously, and appropriate action had been taken immediately to ensure that the material was stored securely and that protocols were developed for the future.

4 Forward Agenda: Schedule of Committee Business for 2023-24

Noted:

- a) the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (Research) Forward Agenda;
- b) that the Annual EDI Report from the Research Strategy Group would be deferred to the October 2024 meeting, and the forward agenda would be updated accordingly. **Action: Governance Manager**

5 Chair's Update

Noted: The Chair had attended a recent briefing by Research England regarding the next stage in preparation for the REF, and a further announcement was expected. The REF had been delayed to 2029, with a deadline for submissions in 2028. The Research Council Board would need to approve proposals for the next stage of the consultation. Details would then be disseminated following the usual processes, via the Director of Research and Business Engagement Services' team.

6 Policy on Responsible International Research Activities and Collaborations

Received: the Policy on Responsible International Research Activities and Collaborations

Noted:

- a) the policy had been developed to define the University's research principles in an international setting, and set out its ambition for collaboration in other jurisdictions;
- b) that, following discussion, a number of amendments would be made to the policy document and an updated version would be circulated to committee members; **Action: Vice-Chancellor for Research/Governance Manager**
 - i. the title at section 14 'Legal Compliance' would be revised, as other sections of the policy related to legal compliance;
 - ii. reference would be made to knowledge exchange (KE) throughout the document;
 - iii. groups and clusters would be referred to, rather than a focus at individual researcher level;
- c) it was agreed that the report on ethical research in the global south, which had been presented to the International Sub-committee in December 2023, would be cross-referenced to the policy;
- d) once approved, the policy would undergo an annual review and would be presented to the committee in future as part of the policy review cycle. A communications plan was under development, through the Research Strategy Group, which would assist promotion of the new policy after initial circulation.

Agreed: to recommend the Policy on Responsible International Research Activities and Collaborations to Senate, following minor amendments.

7 Responsible Research Framework

Received: the Responsible Research Framework.

Noted:

- a) the framework had been established to enhance existing practice that supported responsible research and innovation (RRI);

- b) minor revisions to the framework had been proposed by the Research Strategy Group, and these were clarified by the Chair;
- c) section 5 focused on the main aspect of the framework, which had been funded by EPSRC to support RRI in practice;
- d) the governance of the framework would sit with the Research Strategy Group and the Research Compliance Committee.

Agreed: to approve the Responsible Research Framework, following minor amendments.

8 Early Focus on Research Impact Preparation

Received: the Early Focus on Research Impact Preparation: Operational Priorities for Research Impact (2023-24) Report.

Noted:

- a) the report had been produced following a request, by a member of the committee, for an update on the progress of research impact preparation towards the REF 2029;
- b) the operational priorities had been defined by the Research Impact Group and these would be reviewed annually;
- c) it was confirmed that support for impact case study authors would be provided by Knowledge Exchange and Impact Officers, and support would be in place for departments developing impact strategy at a local level. Consideration would be given to workload allowance, and this would be in accordance with departmental strategy. Further advice would be sought on resourcing impact case studies and other preparations towards the REF, including participation on panels;
- d) a standing item on REF 2029 would be added to the committee's forward agenda; **Action: Governance Manager**

9 Policy Schedule

Received: PGR Policy Schedule.

Noted: that the PGR policy and regulations review schedule had been recently updated.

10 Updated Statement on Research Expectations

Received: the Updated Statement on Research Expectations.

Noted:

- a) that the statement had been updated to include the expectations on academic staff to contribute to PGR end of year reviews and internal examiner responsibilities. It was recognised that academic staff should continue to contribute to these activities as part of their usual responsibilities;
- b) it was acknowledged that there were a number of review documents that were not PGR specific, including international collaboration, the responsible research framework and the statement of research expectations. These documents would be included in a programme for regular review. **Action: Director of Research and Business Engagement Services**

Agreed: to approve the updated Statement on Research Expectations.

11 Recommended updates to the Supervision Policy for Postgraduate Research Degrees

Received: Supervision Policy for Postgraduate Research Degrees.

Noted:

- a) implementation of the policy was clarified, and would include publishing the update on the Research and Business Engagement webpage and as part of the supervisor toolkit. Additional communications would be undertaken to ensure that the appropriate channels were made aware of the policy update and supervisor toolkit; **Action: Associate Vice-President for Research (Manchester Doctoral College and Staff)**
- b) it was confirmed that six new supervision training courses had been launched during the last year, details of which would be included in the communications.

Agreed: to approve the updates to the Supervision Policy for Postgraduate Research Degrees.

12 Detailed Analysis of Research and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Received: Detailed Analysis of Research and the UN Sustainable Development Goals Report.

Noted:

- a) the analysis highlighted the ways in which research contributed to the sustainable development goals and the resulting impact on the University's performance in associated rankings;
- b) it was agreed that awareness should be raised about the use of key data in research papers and abstracts. The report would be circulated to institutes and schools, and shared with the Research Strategy Group for discussion. **Action: Director of Social Responsibility**
- c) that, although research proposals had been co-created with a number of universities internationally, including the University of Ghana and the University of Nairobi, it was acknowledged that not all international co-authoring was being captured. There had been an increase in the University's internationalisation strategy focus, and the establishment of a new strategy group would help to support this;
- d) the University was on the 62nd percentile globally for international co-authorship with low and medium income countries, though collaboration with these countries was increasing. A further breakdown of the 62nd percentile data would be undertaken in relation to the performance towards the SDGs in the Times Higher Education impact ranking methodology; **Action: Director of Social Responsibility**
- e) The Times Higher Education had recently published the most international universities league table; the University of Manchester ranked 23rd globally (up from 29th), and 8th in the UK; the University of Melbourne ranked 29th; the University of Sydney ranked 28th, and the University of Toronto ranked 40th.
- f) The University had been awarded the Platinum Watermark for public engagement. The evaluation had recognised good research impact through public engagement, which would contribute towards the REF and KEF submissions.

13 Assurance of Quality and Standards in Research – recent reports received by the Planning and Resources Committee

Noted: That there had been no associated report items to the Planning and Resources Committee during this period.

14 Information Items

Noted:

- a) [Research and Impact @ Manchester](#) – providing details of the University's research and impact activities and associated events;
- b) no requests for agenda items had been received. Any such requests should be made to the Governance Office at the earliest opportunity;
- c) that the next meetings were scheduled for:
 - 27 March 2024 (in-person)
 - 15 May 2024 (online)