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SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Held on Thursday, 1st November 2007 at 1:15pm in Room 116

MINUTES

Members: Professor P Robb (Chair)
Dr M Bentham
Professor I Brown
Professor M Craven
Dr P Cullet
Mr D Das
Professor R Fardon
Professor CA Gerstle
Professor MJ Hutt
Dr C Lapavitsas
Dr D Martinez
Ms K Oatey (Secretary)

In attendance: Mr R Whiteing

Apologies: Professor G Furniss
Dr A Karlsson
Mrs A Poulson
Mrs S Yates

1. Terms of Reference

- 1.1 The terms of reference of the newly constituted Research Committee were **NOTED**.
- 1.2 The Chair mentioned that, as had been announced when the new terms were agreed, there would be an opportunity to make suggestions about the Committee's terms of reference and membership later in the session or early in 2008/9.

2. Advisory Panels

- 2.1 It was **AGREED** that clause 6 ('to establish procedures for reviewing the ethics of each project relating to human participants') of the terms of reference for the Research Ethics Advisory Panel should be removed.

- 2.2 The memberships and terms of reference of the Advisory Panels were **APPROVED** subject to Chair's action. The Chair and Committee Secretary would consult with Deans in the coming weeks to finalise and confirm the memberships.
- 2.3 It was **AGREED** that the Chair should invite the Chairs of the regional centres to meet regularly with him as a panel to discuss research issues and to report to the Research Committee.

3. Internal Research Funding

- 3.1 The Committee **AGREED** that:

Without earmarking any proportions of the funds, priority would be given to 'seed-corn' projects including support for the preparation of grant applications, for larger, interdisciplinary and/or collaborative projects related to funding council priorities. The aim of such funding was to facilitate the launch and development of a project, or a cluster of research projects, to a stage at which external funding could be sought.

- 3.2 The call for applications would be sent out in the next week with a deadline in early February 2008, for consideration by the Awards Advisory Panel.

4. Research Strategy

- 4.1 The Chair presented the latest draft version of the Research Strategy document for consideration. The Chair explained that the strategy would be revised year on year in the light of changing priorities and would be supported by an accompanying implementation strategy.

The Committee **AGREED** that:

- 4.2 The key points of the strategy should be more clearly emphasised in the document, namely the need for the School to secure increased external funding, particularly through successful bids for fEC grants; and this should focus not only on the largest grants but also on the range from £20k to £100k where success rates might be higher.
- 4.3 All academic staff should be encouraged to increase the number of grant applications they submit and senior academic staff to assume the leadership roles required to manage larger research projects.
- 4.4 A culture of collaboration and urgency needed to be fostered in order to more closely align the School's research activities with the priorities of funding bodies.
- 4.5 The strategy should include a clear statement of the need for additional resources in order to successfully implement its recommendations.

- 4.6 The various School strategies should be integrated to ensure that they are coordinated and complementary.
- 4.7 Contractual arrangements between the School's journal editorial boards and their publishers should be re-examined and, where appropriate, re-negotiated to maximise potential income.

The Chair confirmed that:

- 4.8 The School was in the process of establishing a Planning Office which would be responsible for overseeing the integration of strategies.
- 4.9 A newly revised version of the Research Strategy, taking into account Committee members' feedback, would be circulated in due course.

5 RAE2008

The Research Manager, representing the RAE Director, reported that:

- 5.1 A series of final meeting meetings of internal panels for all Units of Assessment (UoAs) had taken place and the majority of the School's submission was complete.
- 5.2 All twelve narratives (for section RA5a – 'Research Environment and Esteem') had been written with only minor amendments and proof reading required.
- 5.3 With the HESA return completed, research student number data (section RA3a) and research studentships data (section RA3b) had now been entered. External research income data (section RA4) would be entered on 2nd November.
- 5.4 On 7th November there would be a meeting of the Director, Pro-Director, RAE Director, Deans and RAE Team to consider the whole submission and those individuals with forthcoming items still outstanding. The four options available in these cases, outlined by the RAE Director in the latest SOAS Newsletter, were:
 - To withdraw the individual from the submission because there were not the requisite number of publications and there was not sufficient guarantee that the items would appear.
 - To remove the forthcoming item and substitute it with an alternative that had already been published.
 - To decide that there was sufficient indication from the publisher or the journal to be sure that the item was going to be published in 2007 and complete the entry with a leap of faith.

- To decide that there was insufficient indication from the publisher or the journal and so adjust the entry to indicate that the mode of publication was through the SOAS E-prints repository.
- 5.5 After 7th November there would be no more gathering of data and the RAE Team would focus on eliminating all remaining data errors with the intention of making the final submission on 17th November.
- 5.6 Research outputs would be shipped to Bristol on 17th December. Outputs published between 17th and 31st December would be sent by post, no later than 31st January.

6 Any Other Business

The Chair circulated papers, to note, on:

- 6.1 The change in practice of recording details of research publications in SOAS Research Online.
- 6.2 A revised proposal by the Director of Finance for the distribution of income following the introduction of Full Economic Costing for research projects.

The next meeting of Research Committee is at 1:15pm on Thursday 31st January, 2008.