**Core principles for the passage of research-related business through the University's core research governance and support structures**

1. The University's research governance model – i.e. the structure for decision-making and accountability – is academic-led. New policies and initiatives, strategic approaches and any other business with significant implications for the research community must be formally approved by University Research Committee (URC).

2. It is strongly recommended that colleagues developing business for consideration by URC should invite engagement from/consult with the wider academic community as part of the development process, **prior to submission to URC**. This ensures that items of business for URC are focused and informed, and lays the groundwork for subsequent implementation and assimilation of new approaches across the University. A formal committee with a sizeable agenda such as URC is not in itself an appropriate forum for broad academic consultation, nor does URC conduct consultation/engagement itself: its role is to consider finalised proposals once such processes have taken place. The various options for engagement/consultation are set out below. A summary of the process should be provided for URC as part of the item of business so that the Committee can be confident that academic input has been sought at an appropriate level from representatives of the staff which the initiative is going to affect.

3. Colleagues should decide on an appropriate route for academic engagement/ consultation given the nature of the business in hand. The following options are available:

   a. Faculty Research Groups;
   b. Research Forum;
   c. Direct consultation with departmental research committees;
   d. A dedicated representative working group e.g. where input will be sought on multiple iterations of an item under development, and/or if specialist knowledge and engagement with detail is required;
   e. Preliminary soundings on strategic matters can be sought informally from the PVCR, the Deans and/or the Associate Deans;
   f. Input from the professional administrative community can be sought via YRAF.

   More than one route might be adopted as appropriate. Colleagues will need to take into account the following factors:
   i. The significance of the changes proposed;
   ii. The range of people affected;
   iii. The parameters of consultation and the extent to which it is possible/desirable to take account of all shades of opinion;
   iv. Any confidentiality issues;
   v. Whether inter-departmental discussion is needed;

vi.    The level of detail involved – does the group circulate papers in advance?

Details of terms of reference and membership for established groups and their secretaries' contact details for further queries can be found via the following webpage: https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/committees/. **Advance planning will be needed** in order to meet the deadlines for established groups or to set up a dedicated working group, and to allow time to assimilate input prior to submitting an item to URC. A calendar of meeting dates where these are scheduled annually, including URC, can be found via the above web link.

4.  The consultation/engagement process must be **led and managed by the project lead** rather than relying on the Chairs/Secretaries of the various groups. The project lead should prepare an appropriate level of information for the group in question and make it explicit what actions the group is being asked to take (e.g. in the form of a brief and appropriately tailored cover sheet if a formal paper is involved).

5.  Once an item of business has been approved by URC, communication of the outcome and/or the implementation process will need to take place via the appropriate research governance and support groupings. Again, this should be planned in advance, and **led and managed by the project lead**, rather than the Chairs/Secretaries of the various groups, in order to avoid duplication, misinformation and/or premature action. As part of the advance planning, the project lead should consult informally with the Chairs/Secretaries of the various groups to check that plans are appropriate and ensure everyone understands what has been agreed. Information should be tailored appropriately to the audience in question, making it clear what actions it is being asked to take. The formal passage of minutes between groups should not be relied upon to progress business at an operational level (although copies of individual minutes relating to the item of business might be included for information).

*Approved by URC 28 June 2017*