Present: Jonathan Seckl (Convener), George Baxter, Christina Boswell, Jen Cusiter, David Brown, Jarmo Eskelinen, Stuart Forbes, Jane Hillston, Jacq McMahon, Pauline Manchester (item 4), Andy Mount, Michael Rovastos, Sara Shinton, Lorna Thomson

In attendance: Susan Cooper (Secretary), Laura Cockram, Caroline Laffey, Edd McCracken, Katherine Quinn, Dominic Tate

Invited: Alan McKay (item 2)

Apologies: Kevin Collins and Charles ffrench-Constant

Stuart Forbes and Jen Cusiter were welcomed to their first meeting of RPG as the new Dean of Research and Head of the College Research office for CMVM respectively.

1 Note of Last Meeting (21 September 2020) Paper A

Approved

2 Matters Arising Paper B

An Equality and Diversity Working Group is being set up (Minute 8 refers). The other actions were noted.

2 Managing Risk – Internationalisation – Implications for Research Paper C

The Director of Edinburgh Global attended. Members noted that Universities UK had provided advice about how Universities should address the security risk associated with internationalism. In the light of this guidance and the University's international agenda, the University Executive had agreed to develop a policy and process for managing the complex and evolving risks associated with internationalism. It is anticipated that having such a policy will become a condition for the receipt of research funding from UK sources. It was deemed important to get communications right so that researchers did not feel that a University policy to address this risk would have an impact on academic freedom and that staff know that there is a policy and when to apply it.

3 Convener's Update Verbal

The Convener reported on:

- REF2021 developments relating to the second UK wide lockdown
- Changes to the UK research funding environment given Brexit and the merger of DFID with the FCO
- Research Fish exercise for 2021

4 Adaptation and Renewal – Repositioning RPG Verbal

The University is moving from short planning to address Covid-related challenges to medium and long term planning to accommodate the COVID19 pandemic. With that in mind it was suggested that RPG is the best forum for discussions relating to the University's research. The Convener recommended that RPG incorporates the Research strand of Adaptation and Renewal. The frequency of meetings will be increased to every six to eight weeks so that members have enough time to fully discuss the additional material that will be brought to RPG during the pandemic. There was general support for the proposal.

Action	Director of ERO, the interim Director of Planning and the RPG secretary to work together to develop new Terms of Reference to put to the Convenor before being presented to RPG for formal approval
Action	RPG secretary to meet with the Director of ERO and the interim Director of Planning to develop plans to adapt RPG arrangements to put to the Convenor for approval.

5 Committing to Action Plan for Concordat to Support Researcher Career Development Paper D

In the year since the University become a signatory to the Concordat there had been considerable progress on each of the measures that were the responsibility of Concordat signatories. The Head of Researcher Development was congratulated for the progress made with regard to the Concordat. Members noted that IAD had received an award from SFC to establish a virtual postdoctoral centre. The lessons to be learnt from that opportunity would inform proposals to develop a research hub to support the University's postdocs that would integrate with existing support arrangements at Centre, School and College levels.

Agreed: RPG will recommend to University Executive that an Action Plan should be published on the IAD website along with a summary of the progress against the responsibilities set out in the Concordat.

Action	Head of Researcher Development to bring a paper on the establishment of the virtual postdoc centre and any early lessons that could be learnt

6   Changes in the Research Funding Environment   **Verbal**

COVID, Brexit and changes to the UK government's departments are causing changes to the research funding environment. To date, industrial partners are continuing to engage with University research activities. The health charities have reduced their support for research. It is possible that the UK Government, having seen the value of research in supporting the fight against COVID, would be willing put more investment into UK research as part of its 'Build Back Better' strategy.

7   Innovation Strategy   **Paper E**

Members supported the proposals set out in the Innovation Strategy. They recognised that in the present economic climate it was even more important that the University has clear internal and external messaging about its world leading cross disciplinary research themes and the impact that results from that research. Presenting the University's research in this way will facilitate showcasing achievements as well as making it easier to carry out monitoring to assess the extent to which University announcements about research developments are picked up in the media as well as having KPIs to assess the effectiveness of internal communications.

<u>Note from Secretary:</u> The Director of Communications & Marketing has been invited to a future meeting of RPG to address the topic 'Communicating UoE research and innovation: how we are going to do it even better'.

8   Colleges' Forward Plans for Research   **Paper F1-3**

The change to forward facing reports is valuable especially given the changes to RPG. The new CAHSS five year research strategy focusses on promoting interdisciplinarity through SHAPE [1] and other initiatives as well as recognising that the support needed by researchers changes as their careers develop. This approach drew support from other members. Having developed their new research strategy in summer, CSE were turning it into forward facing plans. The new CMVM Dean of Research outlined his College's research plans at the start of his term of office.

9   Growing our Research Together - Update   **Paper G**

The *Programme Design Sprint* was complete. Its purpose was intended to scope out what the next stages should deliver and how to achieve it. Each of the work streams have defined actions that, together, are intended to create a service focussed on the needs of researchers in which researchers and research management professionals work in partnership across teams and services. There will be two further stages which will result in a new research support ecosystem that is co-designed by researchers and professional services staff.

In discussion it was noted that it will be necessary to bring in an external consultant with experience of a large devolved research intensive University to make progress quickly and keep the project focussed. There would also be internal secondments to the next two stages of *Growing our Research Together* so that the University has staff who will have developed such skills.

Action	Members, especially Deans to support the next two stages of the project and engage as requested.

<u>FOR INFORMATION OR APPROVAL</u>

11   Library Research Support report   **Paper H**

Noted

12   Edinburgh Research Office report   **Paper I**

Noted

13   Research Grants and Applications update   **Paper J**

The number of grant applications has increased by 30% which was welcome however the second UK wide lockdown meant that ERO's operational capacity has reduced. Consequently, ERO were having to stick to standard timetables for supporting grant application preparation in order to ensure that we hit funders' deadlines.

Action	Deans to alert Schools to this situation and if necessary to priorities applications for Fellowships and large grants

14   Research Ethics and Integrity Group Report   **Paper K**

Noted

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[1] SHAPE is a new collective name for the Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. Developed by the British Academy and UKRI, it champions the fundamental role of AHSS disciplines in understanding our world, and making it a better place