	Research Policy Group	1 July 2020

Present: Jonathan Seckl (Convener), George Baxter, Christina Boswell, Charles Ffrench-Constant, Jacq McMahon, Jen Milne, Andy Mount, Sara Shinton, Tracey Slaven, Lorna Thomson,

In attendance: Susan Cooper (secretary), Caroline Laffey, Paul McGuire, Bridget Mellifont, Katherine Quinn, Dominic Tate

Invited: Jen Milne, Malcolm MacLeod (item 1-5), Alan Campbell (Item 5 and 6) and Damon Querry (item 8)

Apologies: Gavin McLachlan, Lynn Forsyth

1 Note of Last Meeting (6 May 2020) **Paper A**

After noting that George Baxter had attended the previous meeting, the note was approved.

2 Matters Arising **Paper B**

The actions undertaken or planned were noted.

3 Convener's Update and Restarting Research

The Convener reported on:

- Progress to date to restart research activities following the move to Phase 2 of lockdown easing in Scotland
- Envisaging the shape of the University in the light of short and medium changes to the social and economic environment 'post Covid 19'
- University's contribution to the worldwide efforts to develop better treatments for COVID-19 and improve our knowledge of the virus and how to reduce its spread
- Brexit and current understanding of implications for research

4 Surveying our Researchers to Support the Research Culture **Paper C**

The proposal to carry out a survey was welcomed. The key issues to be resolved were the timing of the survey so that the proportion of those surveyed who respond and the distribution of the responses would mean the results can be considered a fair representation of the surveyed population. It was also important to structure the survey to encourage those who complete the survey to reflect on work environment in general not just the impact of COVID-19. It would be beneficial to make a summary of the survey results available to staff along with an outline of the plans to be implemented to address issues raised and an acknowledgement of any other issues that were subject to further discussion. The survey could be mentioned in the University's REF Environment statement providing it takes place by 31-07-20. The survey results would be presented to the next meeting of RPG.

5 Applying DORA at the University of Edinburgh - Progress

Significant progress had been made since the University had become a signatory to DORA. Meetings about the practical implications of DORA had taken place in each College with further meetings planned. At its meetings the Responsible Metrics Working Group had recognised that a responsible use of research metrics covered several aspects of University activity such as promotion, appraisal and recruitment. Embedding an expectation that using research metrics means considering a basket of metrics not just one and recognising the limitations of each measure. It was noted that each of these HR processes was going through a process of change due to the implementation of People and Money. To assist Schools, the Convenor of the Working group planned to show how his CV could be revised in the light of DORA. RPG was encouraged to learn that there were several areas of good practice with regard to use of research metrics and it was expected that these could serve as exemplars

6 Supporting Researchers affected by Research Misconduct **Paper D**

The nature of research in most disciplines meant that if a team member was the subject of an allegation of research misconduct it could have a negative impact on the other members who were not the subject of an allegation. Members recognised that these staff in these situations need to know from whom they can get support and advice

7 REF2021 update

UKREF had confirmed that the new REF submission deadline would be 31 March 2021 following a consultation. A second consultation to determine COVID-19 mitigation measures was underway. The outcome would be announced by 31 July. Work was ongoing across the University to ensure that all the records of staff who were within scope for REF would be complete and accurate by the REF staff census date, 31-07-20. Collating the required data had been made more challenging because of remote working. Planning for REF review round 3 in the autumn was underway.

For the version of the minutes to be uploaded to the RPG web page, text highlighted in yellow will be redacted as commercially sensitive

8 Adopting a new Pure Portal and its benefits for UoE

The new Pure Portal would be a more attractive frontage for University research and would be easier to navigate. The portal not only offered more scope for highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of much of the University's research activities but also means we could use maps to display the range of national and international collaborations. LRS will ensure that the new Pure Portal's active functionality was consistent with the University's implementation of DORA.

9 People and Money update **Paper E**

The process toward implementing the new HR and Finance systems were outlined.

10 Research Funding Due Diligence **Paper F**

The next stage in the development of guidance for researchers and those in research support roles was welcomed. This was a complex topic and there were no simple answers and so it was important that researchers had a means of thinking through the implications of accepting funding for a specific project. If possible to devise it without oversimplifying the topic, a flowchart would be useful and, if not possible, a checklist.

The next task would be to communicate the message that the University had a process that researchers could follow and ensure that they also know how to access information, advice and guidance if they wished to explore the nature of an offer of funding.

11 Deans' Reports **Paper G**

The Deans were thanked for their informative reports. The CAHSS initiative to provide an online support hub to support research during COVID (SERCH) was warmly welcomed.

12 Research Grants and Applications Update **Paper H**

Overall the University's grant award and application picture was positive and the University was on track for one of its best years to date. ERO planned to investigate whether there were demographic difference in the numbers who had the opportunity to apply for external funding and having applied were successful and to propose action that could be taken to ensure there was equality of opportunity.

For Information or approval

16 Library Research Support Report **Paper I**

Noted

18 Edinburgh Research Office Report **Paper J**

Noted

19 Research Ethics and Integrity Group update **Paper K**

Noted