



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

In attendance: Charlotte Brady, Susan Brydon (interim Secretary), Susan Cooper (secretary), Caroline Laffey, Antony Maciocia, Edd McCracken, Susan McNeil, Katherine Quinn, Dominic Tate

Invited: Anne-Sofie Laegran (item 4)

Apologies: Laura Cockram, Kevin Collins, Charles Ffrench-Constant

1. Note of Last Meeting (13 January 2021)

Paper A

Item 8 should be amended to clarify that only one of the Deans mentioned was new to the role.

All other items approved.

1. Matter Arising

Paper B

All actions noted.

2. Convenor's Communications

Verbal

The Convenor reported on:

- The encouraging reduction in the number of COVID19 cases and the roll-out of the vaccination programme.
- The Scottish and UK Government agreement that lateral flow tests can be carried out on University staff.
- SFC's announcement of additional research capital funding that will be awarded on a formulaic basis
- The predicted impact on the cuts to the overseas aid budget on UKRI funding for GCRF and the implications for grant holders.
- UKRI reserve the right to terminate GCRF contracts. Modelling work is currently being undertaken and award holders will be contacted as soon as possible.

3. New ToR for RPG/combining with ART

Paper C

The proposed new structure, membership and sub structures for a proposed new Research Strategy Group (RSG) which combines Research Policy Group and the R and I Adaptation and Renewal Team was discussed. The name of the group recognised that the focus discussion would be primarily strategic. It was felt that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) would be subsumed into Research Culture instead of forming a separate sub group. With regards to Information Governance it is vital that the group compliments rather than duplicates existing University committees. More details on the remit of the proposed RSG and terms of its sub-groups would be welcomed.

Action	The Director of ERO and the Director of DDI initiative to discuss the group's remit with regards information governance.
Action	The Director of ERO to provide further detail on the remit and terms of the new Research Strategy Group which will be discussed electronically before the next meeting.

4. Supporting Public Engagement with Research

Paper D

The paper provides an update on activities and plans for the Team. RPG whole-heartedly shared the vision that public engagement is valued as an integral part of research activity. Public engagement has the possibility of helping people outside of the University to participate in the research as well as developing and maintaining relationships with policy makers and other external stakeholders in the long-term. The DDI programme remit is committed to substantial public engagement with an outreach target. There is currently no systematic way of capturing this so any mechanism which can help with this will be very welcomed. Projects which are labelled as Public Engagement ones will require ethical approval. Public engagement goes beyond outreach work, relationships are developed with policy makers and organisations which then connect to members of the public.

Agreed: To endorsement of the plan and the retention of the 1.5FTE co-ordinating team and recommend it be approved by University Executive.

5. Research in the time of Corona; what we have been able to do and what we could do in 2021

Papers E1-E3

There is an increasing move to cross-college interaction and themes but it was felt that the necessary funding and support models were not necessarily in place to support this. Professional Research Support is under considerable pressure and there is a strong need to work smarter and more strategically. It is also important to consider mechanisms to support research career structures. Covid had resulted in a reduction in the levels of research and has required research to be carried out in more resilient ways. Future capital investment in altering buildings and facilities, so that a more hybrid style of working could be undertaken, would assist in futureproofing research. The Digital Research Services Steering Group

have indicated that a strategic investment in hybrid working would be helpful in assisting researchers working from home. This would require an investment of ~£4000 which perhaps could be funded from SFC 'COVID' research money.

6. Progress of EDI Working Group

Paper F1-F2

The purpose of the RPG EDI working group is to ensure that EDI practices are mainstreamed within UoE's research culture, continuing the work started by ART. Discussion suggested combining EDI and Research Culture as a longer term sub-committee of RPG/RSG "Research Culture Sub-committee"; proposed chair DVP Research/HoS of Informatics. New ToR will be drawn up.

Action	Head of News, CAM will approach his team for the most appropriate member to be involved in this group.
Action	Head of News, CAM to disseminate EDI style guide to offer uniformity across the University.
Agreed	DVP Research to head new group combining EDI and Research Culture Group.
Action	DVP Research to draw up a new ToR for a combined EDI and Research Culture Group.

7. SFC Funding Progress

Papers G1-G4

There was considerable confidence that following the 10 point plan that a large proportion of the funding allocated by SFC has already been committed.

Action	The pro-term Director of Strategic Planning to discuss challenges around finance spend in Joint European PhD with the CSE Dean of Postgraduate Research ¹
Action	Data Driven Innovation Programme Manager, DDI Office to check on expenditure.

8. Open Research

Paper H

Following the submission of REF 2021, Open Research will be the main area of focus for the Library Research Support Team. The Open Research Roadmap has been updated and is based on LERU's Open Science Roadmap. Good progress has been made against many of the recommendations, particularly in the areas of Open Access, Open Data and Responsible Metrics. Following discussion it was agreed that the focus should be on service assets rather than benchmarking. It was felt that open software should be encouraged as it reaped positive rewards for research. Members welcomed re-reviewing the document. RPG agreed that the Head of LRS should continue to be the University's LERU Open Science Ambassador.

Action	Head of LRS to amend the Open Research Roadmap following comments made at the meeting
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9. Communications (citations/QS Rankings)

Paper I

By providing a supportive message to colleagues and bringing different resources together it is hoped that the number of citations will be increased. The spirit of the paper was much appreciated and it is essential that the messaging to researchers mirrors this supportive and helpful tone. Collaboration with DDI comms as well as LRC would be beneficial. Collaborative working in systemising DOI and open access version in press releases would also be beneficial. It should also be recognised that there will be disciplinary differences across the University and therefore different approaches will be required.

10. Projections from budget areas of spend against research grants.

Verbal

Due to the restrictions of Covid, researchers have been unable to carry out a number of research projects.

11. Doctoral College Management Group

Paper J

The Doctoral College Management Group has reformed after morphing into the PGR ART Group. The Doctoral College Group will report formally to RPG/RSG.

FOR INFORMATION OR APPROVAL

12. Researcher Hub

Paper K

Noted

13. Innovation Working Group

Paper L1&L2

Noted

14. Research Publication Policy

Paper M

Noted

15. ERO update

Paper N

Noted

16. Monthly KPIs

Paper O

It was noted that an anchor was required for every project although limitations of staff resource would make this challenging.

17. Annual Ethics and Integrity Report

Paper P

¹ The CSE Dean of Postgraduate Research is also a member of the University's Education committee which is one of Senate's standing committees

Approved

18. Library Research Support Team Update

Noted

Paper Q