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

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

Invited: Andrea Taylor

Apologies: Laura Cockram, Christina Boswell, Pauline Manchester

1.   Note of Last Meeting (11 March 2021)   **Paper A**

Approved

2.   Matter Arising   **Paper B**

All actions noted.

3.   Incentives to Encourage Industrial Collaborations   **Paper C**

The policy was warmly welcomed by RPG. The benefits to individual academics were clear and would be easy to communicate. In order for an academic to set up an industrial collaboration that will come within the scope of this policy they will have to engage with the Business Development Executives at EI whose role including assisting with such negotiation. Early EI means that proposals details will be recorded in Worktribe at the start.

Action	On the CEO of EI to incorporate feedback from RSG and submit the proposal to University Executive for approval

4.   Terms of Reference for Research Strategy Group   **Paper D**

The revised ToR was approved by RPG. Assuming the ToR is approved by University Executive this would be the last meeting of RPG.

Action	On RSG secretary and Director of ERO to submit the revised ToR to University Executive for approval

5.   Terms of Reference for new RSG Subgroups   **Paper E1-E3**

5.1   Research Culture

Members were asked to provide comments on the revised draft of this TOR and to nominate College representatives. Making connections with other University committees such as the RSG Research Engagement subgroup and effective communications will be vital to ensure that that subgroup can deliver on its objectives.

Action	On Deans to nominate college representatives for the subgroup

5.2   Information Governance (Research)

It will be important that this subgroup works closely with the University Information Governance and Information Security groups as the subgroup has interests in common with these committees. Its interests are of course focussed on research.

Action	On Deans to nominate college representatives for the subgroup

5.3   Research Engagement

Members were asked to provide comments on the revised draft of this TOR and to nominate College representatives.

Action	On Deans to nominate college representatives for the subgroup

6.   Convenor's Update and Changes to Research Funding on the Horizon   **Verbal**

The Convenor reported on:

- Impact of Covid restrictions in Scotland on conducting lab based research and how these differ from England
- Withdrawal of ODA funding and University activity to mitigate impact on GRCF funded projects that had started
- UK and Scottish government budget settlements and what this means for Research
- ARIA – (Advanced Research Invention Agency) and what is known about it so far
- How the University can make the most of UK HEIs' access to EU funding now that we have left EU

7.   Exploring how to Enhance our Research Environment to Develop Staff   Verbal

There were manifold elements to this subject. It was important to identify those issues that can be addressed by taking action within the University and those that require cross sector activity. While recognising the complexity of many of the issues, it is important to acknowledge that they exist. To effect cultural changes given the University's devolved structure involves distributed substantial communication activity to ensure the message gets to all relevant staff and they can see how new or revised policies will be beneficial. The RSG Research Culture subgroup will play a direct role as well as an indirect role in networking with relevant University and College committees as well as specific staff groups. The development of KPIs that use data that isn't onerous to collate will be important to assess effectiveness of plans intended to improve the research environment.

8.   Shaping the University's AI Strategy   Paper F

The paper was warmly welcomed. In the discussion the main point was that a detailed communications plan would be needed to ensure the strategy and its actions are quickly disseminated and the initiatives can be featured in external communications

Action	On the DVP (AI) to incorporate feedback from RSG and submit the proposal to University Executive for approval

9.   Big Bids to Government   Paper G

RPG welcomed the news about progress with the four bids that were the focus of the prospectus prepared for the Scottish and UK Governments. Ongoing stakeholder engagement is vital. For engagement to be effective continued support from the Colleges is key.

10.   Colleges' Forward Plans for Research   Paper H1-H3

- MVM is carrying out a review of its research centres in regard to alignment to MVM research plans
- AHSS are investigating how to maximise Horizon 2020 funding and engage with the propositions covered in Paper G. CSE are considering what aspects of the successful CAHSS SHAPE initiative that was launched in 2020 could apply in CSE.
- CSE are reviewing their Research strategy post REF submission with a view to maximising impact and boosting the research quality and critical mass.

There was a general discussion about boosting research application numbers across all Colleges. IAD have a role to play in enable staff to gain the skills that were appropriate to their career stage, for example applying for their first grants, becoming project leader on an interdisciplinary grant or mentoring others to make their first applications.

Action	On Director of ERO to set up a meeting with the CAHSS Head of College and SVP which she would also attend about research funding.

FOR INFORMATION OR APPROVAL

12.   Library Research Support report   Paper I

Noted

13.   Edinburgh Research Office update   Paper J

Action	On Deans to ensure that Schools know that the deadline for submitting grant applications to ERO is 5pm

14.   Research Grants and Application report   Paper K

Noted

15.   Growing Research Together update   Paper L

Noted