



Present: Charles French-Constant (Acting Convener), Andy Mount, Christina Boswell, Jacq McMahon, Pauline Manchester, David Brown, Kevin Collins, Michael Rovastos, Jane Hillston, Jarmo Eskelinen, Sara Shinton, Tracey Slaven, Lorna Thomson, George Baxter

In attendance: Caroline Laffey, Bridget Mellifont, Katherine Quinn, Dominic Tate, Laura Cockram,

Invited: Malcolm MacLeod (Item 7)

Apologies: Jonathan Seckl, Edd McCracken, Susan Cooper

1 Note of Last Meeting (1 July 2020)

Paper A

Approved

2 Convener’s Update

Verbal

UKRI CoA grants have been devolved to Colleges and allocation is underway. The SFC Chancellors Fellows programme is underway, and the advert is live. CMVM will introduce discussions around fewer appointments with more support at the next ART. SFC PhD allocation has been well received by final year students, but early years students may struggle long term. Contingency guidance is being developed for actions in the case of localised lockdown. Significantly, colleagues are advised not to take pre-emptive actions or decisions, but to wait for further information about risk mechanisms and transmission rates from Public Health.

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

3 Weapons Sector Research Framework

Verbal

A new signatory to the Weapons Sector Research Framework triggered the UoE ethics process, prompting Andy Mount as CSE Ethics Officer to review the project to ensure that the research poses no ethical issues related to current or future work, and reflects the values of the University’s *Strategy 2030*. The ‘triggering’ process indicates that current processes do capture potential ethical conflicts. However, concerns were raised around the specific values criteria used to measure ethical issues.

Action	Lorna Thomson and Tracey Slaven to review and codify criteria for triggering ethics processes to ensure consistency in future similar cases.
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4 Enabling research – Summary of end-to-end research support

Paper B

The Committee welcomed plans for the production of a change programme for research support services across the University. Consultation with senior research leaders will establish objectives and structure for change programme. The programme will begin in the second quarter of 2021. The Committee notes the interconnection of this proposal with other research-related programmes, and suggests that connections with REF, income due diligence, and Horizon Scanning are codified within the change programme. The Committee also notes that the process should be driven by the need to focus on enabling individual researchers to focus on writing high quality grants.

Action	Lorna Thomson to provide update to RPG in January
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5 Bonfire of Bureaucracy – Reducing Burden in Research

Paper C

RPG generally welcomed the proposal, and acknowledged that it includes a range of very positive actions including rationalisation across research councils and a 2 stage application process for UKRI and NIHR. The committee noted that interoperability for Pure and/or Research Fish into other information systems would be welcomed. Central to this is the need to incentivise academics to use Pure to the full. RISG will table a proposal for University approach to Pure.

Action	Sara Shinton to send notes relating to her meeting with the Minister for Science, and develop response that makes processes more research-centred (particularly use of Pure and IAA harmonisation) hold
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6 RPG Membership and Agenda

Verbal

The Committee welcomes following new members:

- David Brown, DVP for Enterprise and Director of Strategic Partnerships.
- Michael Rovastos, DVP for Research (AI) and Director of Bayes Centre.
- Jane Hillston, DVP for Research and Head of School of Informatics.
- Kevin Collins, Assistant Principal for Industry Engagement.
- Jarmo Eskelinen, Data Driven Innovation Programme Director
- Laura Cockram, Communications Manager for ERO, and Communications Lead for ART (R&I)
- Edd McCracken (*absent*), Head of News, Communication and Marketing, and Communications Lead for ART (R&I)

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

The Committee agreed that early career researchers should also be represented on RPG, and that Terms of Reference should be reviewed to ensure responsibilities are articulated, and that membership reflects the objectives of the RPG.

Action	Sara Shinton to provide name for ECR representatives. Tracey Slaven to review TORs in reference to new membership and objectives. Jonathan Seckl to take new membership to Executive for endorsement.
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STRATEGY AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

7 Research Culture

Paper D, DD, E & F

RPG welcomes analysis of the *Research Culture Survey* as a starting point for understanding impacts of research culture at UoE. The committee notes with concern that marginalised groups (esp the disabled) reported a less optimistic view of research and higher rate of adverse experiences, suggesting a broad need to enhance the experience of marginalised researchers. Dr MacLeod is encouraged to work with College Research Committees to gather additional data from smaller groups.

Action	Malcolm MacLeod to provide breakdown of PGRs by College to RPG, and provide ERO with Professional Services analysis. Lorna Thomson to review Professional Services mailing list for future surveys.
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8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Paper G & H

The UKRI EDI Paper (Paper G) indicates that women and BAME minorities are underrepresented in research grants awards. Rowena Arshad's Race Equality Work Group had identified a number of measures to support EDI across the researcher community (Paper H). The Committee agreed to form a short-term working group to establish a proposal for actions within the next academic year, with particularly focus on how intersectionality may be better represented in the University's longer term Strategy.

Action	Charles French-Constant and Bridget Mellifont to take proposed working group to Jonathan Seckl to approve. Jane Hillston supportive, and willing to establish and lead working group.
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9 Major Projects Update

Paper I

The RPG welcomes the update on five Major Projects (ACRC Legal and General proposal, GOFCoE, OneHealth, Rosyth, and Venture Capital Fund). The Committee notes that from October 2020, reporting on major projects will draw together actions in each of the Colleges, DDI and EI. The Committee also notes that there is a strong need for additional wetlab spaces to support the growth of fledgling spin outs to be made available around the BioQuarter.

Action	George Baxter and Charles French-Constant to work with BioQuarter Innovation Committee to identify additional wetlab spaces. David Brown to revise language in Paper I to distinguish project governance from University governance.
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10 Forward Plans

Paper J, K & L

All Colleges have pivoted towards digital formats, and confirmed that strategic research priorities are being developed in reference to established research themes. CAHSS notes the particular strain on their research ability, due to restrictions on face to face research and travel, and the long term effects these will have on active research. The Committee notes the need to review approach to teaching/ research in Semester 2, as researchers require a more integrated approach to their dual roles.

FOR INFORMATION OR APPROVAL

11 Research Funding Due Diligence

Paper M

Approved

12 Edinburgh Research Office Annual Report

Paper N

Noted

13 Annual KPIs and August KPIs

Paper O & P

Noted

14 Planning for Export Control Review

Paper Q

Noted

15 Library Service Update

Paper R

Noted

16 Concordat Action Plan Update

Paper S

Noted

20 People and Money Systems Update

Paper T

Noted