



- Present:** Jonathan Seckl (Convener), George Baxter, Christina Boswell, David Brown, Chris Cox, Jarmo Eskelinen, Jane Hillston, Antony Maciocia, Ed McCracken, Susan McNeill, Andy Mount, Fiona Philippi, Michael Rovastos, James Smith, Dominic Tate
- In attendance:** Susan Cooper (secretary), Charlotte Brady, Jen Cusiter, Jacq McMahon, Katherine Quinn
- Invited:** Libby McCue, Pauline Manchester, Rona Smith
- Apologies:** Laura Cockram, Sara Shinton, Lorna Thomson

1. Note of Last Meeting (18 October 2021)

Paper A

Approved

2. Matter Arising

Paper B

All actions noted.

3. Convener's Update

The Convener briefed members on the following topics:

- DDI opportunities and progress on a key capital project
- Implementation of the University's carbon policy¹
- Horizon 2020 – the UK's current position and a possible alternative to being an associate member
- REF202X – early discussions about what the shape might be and the recently announced consultation
- Innovate UK's strategic themes

The Deputy Vice-Principal Enterprise & Director of Strategic Partnerships gave an update the progress toward updating the Innovation strategy. The revised document will propose a simplified governance structure and robust means of assessing the delivery of the strategy that is not onerous

4 Research cost recovery

In the discussion following a presentation by the Head of the Research Grants team, the key points were:

- It is important that the University understands the true cost of research and that, as far as possible, research funders contribute to the cost of shared research facilities and services that are directly required to carry out research and make the results publicly available.
- To achieve the above, we must counter the following perceptions:
 - We can continue to rely on income from teaching, especially from international students, to cross-subsidise research;
 - Including accurate assessment of the true costs of carrying out research in funding applications makes it less likely that the bid is successful;
 - That it is possible to do research without funding: all research requires funding be it competitively won external awards, endowments, donations or SFC funding that is allocated on a formulaic basis. All research has costs for staff, estates, professional support, digital and data, etc. Additionally, it is our duty to train the next generation of researchers (PhD students, postdocs) who require funding. .
- Ensuring that more of the cost of shared facilities and services is included in bids for research requires better quality information that, it is hoped, can be delivered by People and Money.
- We must become better at requesting the costs of shared research facilities and services which are essential to carry out research and make results publicly available.
- It is recognised that different types of funders vary in the level they will pay for the cost of shared research facilities and services.

5. Current Research Funding Portfolio

Paper C

Reflecting on a summary of the University current research funding portfolio, members agreed that we must become more agile in order to ensure that we maximise the value as well as the number of the awards given the level of uncertainty about the UK research funding environment. To be successful we must bring in more money from each of the main funder groupings. Becoming more agile and thus able to react more rapidly to cross disciplinary opportunities requires a concerted cross University effort as well developing new international partnerships. Horizon scanning to be alert to changes in funders' intentions will become ever more important. Members acknowledged that the continuing

¹ At the 2021 Green Gown awards (UK and Ireland) the University was the winner in the Large HEI category for 2030 Climate Action and was highly commended in another category <https://www.greengownawards.org/2021-winners1x>

uncertainty about whether UK will complete the process to become an Associate Member of Horizon Europe was yet another challenge.

6. North American Partnerships

Paper D

Members agreed that we need to establish a number of strategic partnerships with North American universities. Those proposed were thought a good choice. Some lessons can be learnt from how partnerships with European Universities have been established while noting that the Higher Education landscape in the USA and Canada is different. Building mutually advantageous partnerships requires a coordinated 'top down – bottom up' approach that draws on university strategy as well as the contacts and ambitions of our researchers.

7. Boosting Numbers Engaged in Commercialisation Work

Paper E

In recent years the level of activity had improved considerably. Translational research provides evidence of the impact of the University's research. Securing agreement to work with multinationals is particularly beneficial both in terms of the monetary value and raising the University's international profile. It was also important for support to help those seeking to work with SMEs as this activity both gave researchers the experience of building commercial partnerships as well as showing University engagement².

8. CMVM College Plan 2021

Paper F

The plan was very informative and is a useful guide to the activities that CMVM had already started as well those that were planned.

9. CSE and CAHSS Updates

Paper G (CAHSS)

The Deans of Research for CSE and CAHSS were thanked for their informative updates.

10. Planning Update and SFC REG/ RPG Consultation

Paper H

In response to a helpful presentation by the Director and Deputy Directors of Planning and Insight covering external key developments relevant to UoE Research, the internal planning cycle and the ongoing SFC consultations on its new Research funding methodology, the main discussion points were:

- It was not anticipated that SFC would have any additional funding for research even if the REF2021 results showed improvement relative to REF2014.
- It was important to keep showing to external stakeholders how research carried out in each of the Colleges was contributing to the battle against COVID-19
- Additional money had been announced in the UK Government's Budget for research, which is taken into account in the Barnett Formula. However, the Scottish Government sets its own funding priorities which need not follow those announced in the UK Budget.

FOR INFORMATION OR APPROVAL

11. Grant applications and Awards update

Paper I

Noted

12. Research Ethics and Integrity Group report

Paper J

Noted

13. Edinburgh Research Office report

Paper K

Noted

14. Research Cultures report

Paper L

Noted

² BEIS estimated that at the start of 2021, SMEs accounted for 99% of the UK Business population. 15% of all SMEs are operate professional, scientific and technical areas <https://www.fsb.org.uk/uk-small-business-statistics.html>