



# Research Strategy Group

## Note of meeting on 8 June 2022

- Present:** Jonathan Seckl (Convener), David Brown, Jarmo Eskelinen, Stuart Forbes, John Jeffrey, Laura Jeffery, Antony Maciocia, Andy Mount, Fiona Philippi, Michael Rovastos, Dominic Tate, Lorna Thomson
- In attendance:** Susan Cooper (secretary), Jen Cusiter, Jacq McMahan, Katherine Quinn
- Apologies:** George Baxter, Christina Boswell, Laura Cockram, Chris Cox, Jane Hillston, Ed McCracken, Susan McNeill, Sara Shinton, James Smith

### 1. Note of Last Meeting (18 April 2022)

Paper A

Approved

### 2. Matter Arising

Paper B

All actions noted.

### 3. Convener's Update

The Convener briefed RSG on the following subjects:

- REF2021 results – Edinburgh relative to Russell group and Scottish Universities
- Scottish Government's plans make Scotland a 'world-class technology hub'
- Engaging with the Wellcome Trust
- REF202X and the FRAP

### 4 Scottish and UKRI Research Funding position

Paper C

By 2024-25 UKRI's budget will be £8.85 billion – a 14% increase relative to 21-22. Over the same period spending on RDI in other UK Government Departments such as Health and Defence is expected to rise from £14.9 billion to £20 billion. UKRI issued its budget for 2022-23 to 24-25 on 30 May. It is clear that the UKRI uplift is not evenly spread. Innovate UK will get a 54% increase. Among the Research Councils, AHRC will effectively get flat cash between 21-22 and 24-25. NERC and MRC receive an increase in their share of the total allocated to the Research Councils. The Research England budget will rise by 34%. Scotland will benefit as consequence of the Barnett formula but the Scottish Government is not obliged to spend the extra money on HEIs. There was no information about the ODA funding nor any further information about how the ARIA budget will be used.

In discussion the following points were made:

- With inflation at 9% and predicted to rise to 11%, the value of the UKRI uplift could disappear
- The UK R&D tax credit system had been enhanced in the Spring Statement which should give industrial partners more of an incentive to work with researchers

The University's REG allocation had increased significantly. The main reason for the increase in REG allocation because the percentage increase in the University's REF submission was greater than other Scottish HEIs. The increase in quality and the changes to the formula were also beneficial.

### 5 Chancellor's Fellows –Setting up next cohort

Paper D

Members showed support in principle for a proposal that there should be an additional recruitment round for Chancellor's Fellows. Provost and incoming RSG convener were expected to consider the proposal over the summer and early autumn.

### 6 UK International Development Strategy

Paper E

This item will be discussed at the next meeting of RSG by which time it is hoped the size of the budget for the International Development Strategy will be known

### 7. College updates

In their updates, the Deans covered the following topics:

- All Colleges had started to learn from the REF2021 results
- CAHSS were undertaking a cross University qualitative study to explore the reasons for the gender disparity in output selection for submission to REF2021
- CSE will hold meetings with Scottish and international partners to discuss opportunities to work together
- CMVM are exploring establishment of two new cross College interdisciplinary centres

### 8. Learning from REF2021 results and preparing for the next REF

Paper F

Mindful of the comments expressed by the Convener that the University needs to build on its success in REF2021, a plan of action was discussed to carry out qualitative analysis of the submissions from comparator universities. The results of that plan will be brought to the next meeting of RSG.

The Deans, with assistance from the Colleges Research Managers, to ask their schools to:

- To decide which Universities' UoA level submissions they should compare themselves against;
- Download and study the REF5B and REF3s submitted by these UoAs and identifying learning points; and
- Provide a report summarising the learning points that were applicable in a UoE contest as well as listing the HEIs that they had chosen for the qualitative analysis and stating how they had decided which were their comparator HEIs

The other members of RSG who represent an area relevant to RSG's remit will study the REF5As of a set number of Universities that have been chosen as suitable comparators that were listed in Paper F and determine the learning points that could be applied to the UoE.

Action on the RSG secretary to:

- Agree a timetable with the Deans and College Research Managers in order that Colleges would bring reports collating the common themes identified by the schools to the meeting of RSG on 31st August
- Ask the other members of RSG how they can contribute, which maybe to read specific sections of the REF5A and identify a number of series of learning points to share with the RSG secretary who will bring a report to the RSG meeting on 31st August; and
- To bring a report to RSG that will bring together what can be learnt from the UKREF reports from the Main Panels, the overall manager, the E&D Advisory Panel, the REF4 data and the a draft action plan to address the recommendations in University REF submission report presented to RSG in October 2021

FOR INFORMATION OR APPROVAL

**9. Research Grants and Applications update**

**Paper G**

Noted

**10. Research Engagement Subgroup Report**

**Paper H**

Noted