



Research Strategy Group

Note of meeting on 19 August 2021

- Present:** Jonathan Seckl (Convener), George Baxter, , Christina Boswell, Charlotte Brady, David Brown, Catherine Burns, Chris Cox, Jarmo Eskelinen, Stuart Forbes, Antony Maciocia, Susan McNeill, Michael Rovastos, Sara Shinton, James Smith
- In attendance:** Susan Cooper (secretary), Charlotte Brady, Jennifer Cusitor, Edd McCracken, Jacq McMahan, Katherine Quinn
- Invited:** Alan Campbell, Fiona Campbell, Rachael Robertson, Aine Ryan
- Apologies:** Laura Cockram, Jane Hillston, Andy Mount, Dominic Tate, Lorna Thomson

1. Note of Last Meeting (July 2021) **Paper A**
Approved

2. Matter Arising **Paper B**
All actions noted.

3. Convener's Update
The Convener briefed members on the following topics:

- ARIA – early signs of what it will cover and how it will operate
- Likely content of the UKRI submission to the UK Treasury as part of its Comprehensive Spending Review
- Early indicators of what the CSR may mean for UK research, especially how UK participation in Horizon 2020 will be funded

4. Colleges Update
CMVM were about to receive confirmation that its ECAT programme funding will be renewed by the Wellcome Trust. The Trust was carrying out a review of its activity. It was not anticipated that the review would cause Wellcome to make large changes to the areas of research it funds.

CAHSS had been shortlisted for 2 ESRC research centre grants. The College was working with EI to determine how SHAPE can support other industry focussed research activity. CMVM and CSE would be engaging with CAHSS to set up an interdisciplinary network to support new ECR cohorts, focused on University strategic themes.

5. Growing International Research **Paper C**
The paper was well received. It is vital that the University increases its number of international research partnerships. Establishing what new partnerships should be built and which existing ones should be strengthened requires creating a framework to assess each proposal and how determine how each can contribute to Strategy 2030.

To identify which HEIs we should build links with as well as building and maintaining those links will require a 'top down' and 'bottom up' approach so that we fully benefit from expertise and knowledge from across the University. So that we know which international links we should be building, we need to:

- Know what we wish to achieve from international partnerships; it is quite likely that different partnerships will deliver different benefits;
- Know what our potential International partners will expect from us;
- We need to assess existing partnerships and linkages and determine what can be learnt from them that can be applied to identifying and building new linkages;
- Have a basket of relevant KPIs will mean we can assess which potential linkages are bring most benefits either individually or as one of a number of linkages;
- Recognise that quantitative metrics will not be sufficient, qualitative assessments will also be important as not all factors that we would wish to consider when assessing a potential linkage are measurable;
- Value the views of our different academic communities and recognise that different academic disciplinary groupings will benefit from different types of partnerships;
- Make should that all voices across the University's academic disciplines are listened to gain a diversity of views.

It must be clearly understood that any approaches to a HEI outside the UK with the objective of building a research partnership should be made with institutional support and knowledge rather being individual initiatives.

Action	On the VP International and the International Research Funding Manager (ERO) to present a report on progress with this multi-layered task at a future meeting of RSG.
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6. Research Internationalisation – Opportunities

The imperative of creating and building international connections will be facilitated by updating the University's Innovation strategy. The revised plan will be presented to the meeting of RSG in December. Input would be sought from EI, all the Colleges, ERO and Edinburgh Global. The purpose of the strategy will be twofold: provide a clear internal picture as well as a strong message for external stakeholders in Scotland and rest of UK that shows how University's research and KE activities contribute to the priorities of the Scottish and UK Governments.

Action	On the Director of Strategic Partnerships to bring an updated UoE Innovation Strategy to the meeting of RSG in December
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7. National Security and Investment Act and Higher Education

Paper D

The duties that the NSIA places on all UK HEIs are complex. It is vital that: researchers can get expert advice about how to comply with the Act; know how to access the advice; and understand that they must follow it. BEIS can retrospectively assess activities that started before the Act became law. BEIS are expected to provide more material on how the Act will be applied. Over time body of 'case law' should develop. Through the application of the Act, HEIs should be able to identify those activities for which it will be advantageous to make voluntary declarations. The application of the Act should mean HEIs will be able to learn which activities will be given a light touch and which will be thoroughly assessed. The BEIS unit responsible for the Act was small relative to the volume of work it is likely to have to carry out.

Action	On behalf of the University's NSIA working group, the Research Integrity Manager to provide an update which will cover proposals on how the UoE can carry out its duties under the Act
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8. UoE Financial Position at Year End and Forecast

Members received an oral report on the University's financial position.

9. UK Govt Innovation Strategy – Engagement Preparation

Paper E

Members welcome the UK Innovation Strategy. While being light on substance, the Innovation Strategy is a useful indication of this aspect of the UK Government's vision for a post Brexit UK. The principal value of the UK Innovation Strategy was that it indicates what follow on strategies and consultations will be forthcoming which have the purpose of enabling the UK Government to develop policies turn the vision into reality. The Innovation Strategy was very wide-ranging and, having noted that the UoE had a considerable interest in engaging with each of the 15 strategies and consultations mentioned, it was agreed that we need to prepare to submit a response to each of the consultations in advance of them being published by identifying who should lead. It would also be advantageous to consider how the University can build links with the UK National Science and Technology Council as well as engaging with the Scottish Government if it should consider carrying out a skills audit of the needs of emerging industries.

Action	On the DDI Programme Director to work with the Director of Strategic Partnerships and CEO of Edinburgh Innovations to identify senior staff who would be best able to lead on the preparation each of the consultations that were mentioned in the Innovation Strategy and preparing to engage with the follow-on strategies as they are published.
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10. UKRI Open Access Policy and the University

Paper F

Finally having confirmation of what the UKRI policy was good news. It was reassuring to note that the predictions that Library Research Support had made about the main points in the policy were generally correct and it had done some early planning. Considerable additional work will be needed to prepare the University to communicate what the policy means to University's academic staff and develop internal policies to implement the requirements of UKRI.

Action	On the Head of LRS to produce report on progress on making changes to take account of the new UKRI Open Access policy and dissemination plans as soon as more UKRI publish more detailed information.
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FOR INFORMATION OR APPROVAL

12. Edinburgh Research Office report

Paper G

Noted

13. Research Grants and Applications report

Paper H

Noted

14. University AI Strategy – Mobilisation Plan - update

Paper I

Noted