



Present: Christina Boswell (Convener), George Baxter, Chris Cox, Jarmo Eskelinen, Stuart Forbes, Laura Jeffery, Anne Sofie Laegran, Edd McCracken, Antony Maciocia, Andy Mount, Fiona Philippi, James Smith, Dominic Tate

In attendance: Susan Cooper (secretary), Jen Cusiter, Katherine Quinn, Lynn Walford

Apologies: Chloe Kippen, Susan McNeill, Lorna Thomson

1. Note of Last Meeting (17 April 2023)

Paper A

Approved

2. Matter Arising

Paper B

2.1 Minute 5 (University Postgrad Research Student Population – Size and Shape)

The first report that would follow on from the ‘white’ paper would be presented to meeting of RSG on 12th September.

2.2 Minute 5 (University Postgrad Research Student Population – Size and Shape)

The most suitable meeting in 2023/24 at which a further discussion would take place would be agreed by the Convener, Co-lead of the Doctoral College leadership group, and RSG secretary.

3. Convener’s Update

The Convener’s briefing covered the following topics:

- Latest Advanced Research and Invention Agency developments and opportunities for the University
- Scottish Government National Innovation Strategy
- University Sustainable travel policy and University’s use of Diversity Travel as a travel agency and next steps

4 Research Strategy Group Review

Paper C

Before considering the recommendation, members acknowledged that the production of the report had been a significant task which drew on the input from all members and several internal stakeholders. The 37 recommendations covered five themes: A) General impressions of RSG and how it functions; B) Remit of RSG and its Areas of Responsibility; C) RSG membership and stakeholders; D) RSG subgroups; and E) Governance and reporting arrangements

In the discussion about the report and its recommendations, the main points were:

- The Remit and Areas of Responsibility would be updated in line with the comments provided in the report;
- The purpose of bringing the RSG scope and areas of responsibility to a RSG meeting on a biennial basis was to ask members to re-affirm their approval, not to carry out a biennial review;
- Each College Research Committee was a part of governance structure of the relevant College but should be also recognised as subgroups of RSG;
- A mapping should be produced that shows RSG’s place in the University’s Governance structures which should take into account of RSG’s formal reporting structures and those committees and groupings on which RSG members sit;
- RSG should have an ECR representative who should be drawn from the Research Culture Forum
- RSG membership would not be expanded to include any of the other internal stakeholders;
- When their input was relevant to an item for discussion, RSG would invite a representative of internal stakeholders not on RSG as well key research centres and networks, such as EPCC, Edinburgh Infections Diseases, and Edinburgh Futures Institute. There was no need for additional members; and

Approved: the recommendations in the RSG report and implementation timetable

Action	i) Convenor to present the key recommendations of the RSG review to the Provost ii) RSG secretary to follow the timetable for implementing the recommendations
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5 Research and Innovation Strategy Update

The draft Research and Innovation strategy would be presented to the Research and Innovation Strategy Steering Group, Heads of College, the Provost, VP International and VP Students for feedback. Feedback would also be sought from other members of RSG. A further draft would be considered by College Research Committees. At the time of the meeting it was anticipated that a final draft would be presented to University Executive in late November. By the stage that the R&I strategy is presented to University Executive, it would have a brief implementation plan, delivery of which would be overseen by RSG.

6 Future Research Assessment Programme

Paper D

The Convenor gave a presentation covering the Initial REF2028 decision document as well as early thoughts on what the proposals therein could mean for the University. There was a discussion about the proposals. The main points were:

Staff Volume Using an average from the HESA staff return for 2025/26 and 2026/27 (pilot year 2024/25) would increase the volume of work considerably. There were concerns about the impact on staff and the E&D implications.

Outputs The plan to decouple outputs from people would be challenging to explain to staff involved in selecting outputs; the decision to remove the minimum and maximum of outputs associated with an individual was likely to create EDI issues rather than solve them. The proposal to have an output statement was unlikely to remove the likelihood of considerable gaming across the sector.

Impact The proposals to reduce the number of Impact case studies each UoA would have to submit were welcome. There were concerns that the proposal for one of the assessment criteria to be concerned with the impact pathway would disadvantage ICS without a clear pathway to impact. There were concerns that many of the metrics for the impact statement would also be required for the English Knowledge Exchange Framework and as a consequence English HEIs would be better prepared.

Environment Adapting to the proposed style of the Environment statement would be a challenge but it was one that the University's UoAs would rise to.

7 Engaging with International Opportunities

Paper E

Members welcomed the opportunity to discuss the draft Global Plan and Principles for Global Engagement, noting the plans for further consultation at College level, and how the plan would align with the developing both the Research and innovation and Teaching and Learning strategies. There was a need to diversify the geographic spread of partnerships, which meant determining how best to make use of resources to support existing partnerships, build those at an early stage of development and provide backing for those seeking to create new partnerships. The need to diversify would have to reflect the geopolitical context and the external pressures placed on University in regard to research security and risk management.

8. Safeguarding and Research Security

Paper F1 & F2

The deadline for comments on the Safeguarding paper (F2) was Friday 30th June. A discussion of Paper F2 (Research Security) was postponed to a future meeting in 2023/24.

9. College Reports

Paper G1 to G3

The Deans were thanked for their informative reports

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Visa and Sponsor costs. The University's policy is to offer financial assistance to new or current staff whose immigration status means they require a visa to work. Clarity is needed for those cases where a staff member is employed on a research grant in which the conditions of award mean that it cannot be used to pay visa costs.

PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

11 Major Initiatives Group

Paper H

Noted

12 Library Research Support report

Paper J

Noted

13 Research Ethics and Integrity Group report

Paper K

Noted

14 Growing Research Together update

Paper L

Noted

15 Research Grants and Applications update

Paper M

Noted

16 Edinburgh Research Office report

Paper N

Noted