



- Present:** Christina Boswell (Convener), Jen Cusiter, Laura Jeffery, Anne Sofie Laegran, Andy Mount, Antony Maciocia, Fiona Philippi, Katherine Quinn, Dominic Tate, Lorna Thomson, Lynn Walford; Susan Cooper (secretary)
- Apologies:** George Baxter, Catherine Burns, Stuart Forbes, Jarmo Eskelinen, Chloe Kippen, Edd McCracken, James Smith
- Invited** Dave Gorman (item 4)

RSG thanked Catherine Burns (Assistant Director of ERO) for 18 years of service supporting the University’s RDI community. She would be joining St Andrews as its Executive Director of Research and Innovation Services in January.

1. Note of Last Meetings (12th September 2023)

Paper A

Approved

2. Convener’s Update

The Convener’s briefing covered the following topics:

- The Provost and Convener were witnesses at the House of Commons Scottish Affairs committee’s oral evidence sessions for its Scotland and Science enquiry. The Convenor was representing Universities Scotland.
- Meetings with MPs and the Scottish Government that were an opportunity to showcase the impact of UoE research
- Senior appointments to ERO to support big bids activity and ensure research security and compliance.
- How the GRT programme board and Strategic Programme Board are working together and what this means for GRT
- The shift from the approval of the R&I strategy, after it is approved by Court, to its implementation
- The Curriculum Transformation Board’s enthusiasm about the idea of linkage with the R&I strategy, especially the idea that each year one of the R&I Missions could be as a framework for experiential and challenge-based learning

3. College Research reports

Paper B1 – B3

The Deans reported on the status of appointment process for the that latest cohort of Chancellor’s Fellows. Those with protected characteristics had been encouraged to apply with the objective of increasing the number staff from underrepresented groups. The Deans also reported recent successes in securing funding.

4. Climate Change and Sustainability: University Plans

Paper C

The Director of SRS outlined the current stage of development of the new University Climate Strategy. Members noted there was linkage between the Climate Strategy and the Research and Innovation Strategy, which was in the latter stages of its approval. The alignment of both University strategies would place the University in a good position to comply with the UKRI Concordat on Research Sustainability, which was due to be published in the New Year.

Turning to the ongoing discussion about Sustainable Travel policy and the requirement to use Diversity Travel, the Convenor and Director SRS stated that there would be an external review. It would take account of the impact on research especially PGR and those with protected characteristics and the University need to reduce its ‘travel’ carbon footprint.

5. REF2028 Update¹

Paper D

The convenor outlined the high-level timetable for REF2028 from January to June 2024. The UKREF announcement in December and its announcement in New Year on PCE development plans will have a major bearing on REF preparation timing. The key activities would be: i) setting up the REF board; ii) planning and holding workshops about how to ‘construct an output pool’; iii) continuing to make progress that would lead to the creation of impact case studies (ICS); iv) planning activity so that the key HESA fields for REF were accurate; and v) appointing academic and professional services staff to key central, College and UoA REF roles.

Action	Head of Research Impact to present proposals for reviewing ICS. The aim was to make more use of those with impact and engagement expertise.
Action	Convener, with assistance from the RSG secretary, to set up a technical task and finish group to identify indicators the University was already in a position to produce for use in the HEI and UoA level PCE statements.

6. Research Engagement and Impact Plans

Paper E

The ERO Research Impact and Engagement Team was now operational. The team’s action plan for 2024 covered the following themes: Strengthening University’s engagement and impact culture; Enhancing the influence of our research on public policy; Enabling public engagement and involvement with our research; Developing and demonstrating impact from research. The action plan detailed the activities associated with each theme. The Head of Impact also stated that there would be an Impact and Innovation Festival. The festival was likely to cut across each theme in the action plan. Members

¹ UKREF announced that the deadline for the next REF would be late autumn 2028 not 2027 a week after this meeting of RSG.

recognised that that the delivery of the action plan would not only support the creation of impact case studies for the REF but would be of wider benefit to the University.

7. Support for Public – Patient Involvement

Paper F

All major funders and stakeholders, including UKRI and Universities UK, have signed the [Shared commitment to Public Involvement with health and social care research²](#), which is leading to funders making a fundamental change in the way PPI is viewed and prioritised. Clinical teams who were carrying out research are used building PPI into their research plans. The Shared Commitment meant that researchers in other disciplines across the three Colleges would be expected to build PPI into their research plans. To illustrate the breadth of this widening the Head of Impact cited several examples of disciplines and the fact that the development was already influencing the assessment of grant applications. The paper was the result of discussion about how to manage this increased expectation and had concluded that the University should invest in a new grade 7 post dedicated to public involvement in health research.

After a discussion, RSG recognised that there was need for such a post and agreed to the proposed next steps.

8. Research Security

Paper G

There were UK and international pressures to improve research security and University activity needs to be more coordinated. It was becoming increasingly important that researchers have a greater awareness that some activities carry a greater risk than others without imposing a burden. ERO is establishing a Research Compliance, Research Governance, Compliance & Risk team that would liaise with all those involved with due diligence across the University.

Action	Head of Research Governance, Compliance and Risk team would be invited to a next meeting of RSG
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9. REG Uplift Delivery

Paper H

Members noted the paper that was presented to RSG because it has responsibility for monitoring the REG delivery plan.

10. UKRI Open Access Policy – Long form outputs

The Head of LRS explained the new UKRI Open Access policy for long form outputs³. UKRI would have a dedicated fund to support researchers with the costs of making such outputs OA but there were maxima to how UKRI would contribute. Some publishers may impose higher charges which raises the issue of whether the University should allow researchers to 'top up'. This was a sensitive subject as there was a careful balance must be achieved between academic freedom to choose published and the need for UK HEIs to be united and reduce certain publishers' efforts to increase charges.

Action	Head of LRS to seek views of RSG on whether the University should introduce a policy that would limit the long form processing charges that the University would pay to the UKRI maxima.
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PAPERS FOR APPROVAL

11 *Research Culture delivery – RSG responsibilities*

Paper J

Having noted the RSG's responsibilities which were set out in the Research Cultures Delivery plan, members agreed to the implementation proposals. The issue of precarity within the scope of the Research Cultures Delivery plan was also discussed and would be a subject that RSG would consider at a future meeting.

PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

12 Library Research Support

Paper K

Noted

13 Research Grants and Applications update

Paper L

Noted

14 Edinburgh Research Office report

Paper M

Noted

13 Research Ethics and Integrity Group report

Paper N

Noted

14 Major Initiative Group Note

Paper P

Noted

² The groups deemed to be within scope are: patients; carers; advocates; service users and members of the community.

³ <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/publishing-your-research-findings/open-access-funding-and-reporting/#contents-list>