

The University of Edinburgh

**Meeting of the Senatus Researcher Experience Committee  
to be held on 16 January 2018 at 2.00 pm  
in the Board Room, ECA Main Building**

**A G E N D A**

- |           |  |                          |
|-----------|--|--------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017</b>  | Enclosed                 |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Matters Arising</b>   | REC 17/18 3A             |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Convener's Communications</b>   |                          |
|           | <b>For Discussion</b>  |                          |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Enlightenment Scholarships</b>  | REC 17/18 3B<br>– Closed |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>Excellence in Doctoral Research &amp; Career Development:</b>   |                          |
|           | <b>5.1 Progress report on work stream 1: Supervisor Training and Support. Short life task group – Continuing Professional Development for Doctoral Supervisors</b> | REC 17/18 3C             |
|           | <b>5.2 Progress report on work stream 2: Mentoring and Wellbeing</b>   |                          |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Update on Review of the Code of Practice for Supervisors &amp; Research Students</b>  | REC 17/18 3D             |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Supervisor roles – discussion paper</b>   | REC 17/18 3E             |
|           | <b>For information and formal business</b>   |                          |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Service Excellence Programme update: Student Administration and Support</b>   | REC 17/18 3F             |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Knowledge Strategy Committee report</b>   | REC 17/18 3G             |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Research Policy Group Report</b>  | REC 17/18 3H             |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Any other business</b>  |                          |
|           | <b>11.1 Conferences and events</b>   |                          |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Date of next meeting</b>  |                          |
|           | 13 March 2018, Hodgson Room, Weir Building, King's Buildings   |                          |

Susan Hunter, Academic Services, 10 January 2018

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**Matters Arising****Executive Summary**

- **Student Status – systems update** (item 2.1, September 2017)  
Provided by Lisa Dawson, Head of Operations, Student Systems Partnership  
  
Head of Operations, Student Systems Partnership is presenting a resource plan to the Deputy Secretary Student Experience on 18 January 2018. This will provide options for both the remediation work required to live systems such as postgraduate research and the development work required to support service excellence. An electronic update will be provided to Researcher Experience Committee (REC) following presentation of the resource plan to confirm the work that will be undertaken within the next year.
- **Recommendations from report into “PGR student wellbeing strategies”** (item 4.2, December 2017) – A verbal update will be provided by the Vice-Convenor under item 5 on the January 2018 agenda.
- **Heads of Graduate Schools meeting to discuss Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) topics** (item 5, December 2017) – Academic Services will facilitate a meeting for cross-College sharing of practice and experience. Discussions will be based on the topics arising from PRES results identified at the December REC meeting. The meeting will be held at an appropriate time to be identified in consultation with Colleges.
- **Update on Old Kirk Project** (item 5, December 2017)  
Provided by Amy Murray, Project Manager, Estates Department

Until late 2016 the Old Kirk was used as site accommodation for the contractor's team who were constructing the Post Graduate Student Accommodation and Outreach Centre at Holyrood. It is appropriate, having completed the new student accommodation development, for the University to complete the regeneration of the area by redeveloping the Old Kirk which sits in a prominent position adjacent to the new development. This gives the University the opportunity to provide a differentiated experience for our Post Graduate students close to where they live and brings new life back into a disused building. The completed study facility will significantly enhance the Post Graduate student experience and create a unique and distinctive environment for the Post Graduate community.

Following the initial approval to proceed with the project the design team worked through the concept and detailed design stages during 2016 and early 2017 towards a frozen Stage 3 (D) design package in the spring of 2017. Stakeholder consultations with Post Graduate representatives for each College were held in spring 2017 which

provided further direction for the types of individual/ group study and post graduate events which may take place in the building. Subsequently the Full Business Case was finalised over the summer and presented and approved at the September 2017 Estates Committee. Further student focussed consultations including EUSA took place at the end of 2017. Planning Permission was granted at the end of 2017. The technical design period has now commenced with a view to starting on site near the end of 2018 with occupation by the end of 2019/ start of 2020.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan Objective of Excellence in Research.

**Action requested**

REC is invited to note the paper.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

No actions are associated with the paper.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance****1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

No resource implications are associated with the paper.

**2. Risk assessment**

No risk assessment is associated with the paper as it is an information update only.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

There are no equality and diversity implications associated with the paper.

**4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**.

**Originator of the paper**

Susan Hunter, Academic Services

9 January 2018

REC: 16.01.18

H/02/26/02

**REC 17/18 3C**

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## **Short life task group – Continuing Professional Development for Doctoral Supervisors**

### **Executive Summary**

The paper sets out information on a proposed short life task group to be convened to explore and make recommendations to REC on the creation of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework for doctoral supervisors. REC approved this action in December 2017 and is now requested to comment on and approve the composition and objectives for this group.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan objective of Leadership in Research and the Committee's priorities of Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development. It forms part of work stream 1 of the Excellence Programme, supervisor support and training. It also aligns with current review of the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.

### **Action requested**

The Researcher Experience Committee (REC) is requested to comment on and approve the composition and objectives for this group.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

The Vice-Convenor will implement and communicate agreed action to all relevant stakeholders.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**  
Resource implications will be covered initially through IAD. If further resource is required this will be communicated to the committee in due course.
- 2. Risk assessment**  
No major risks identified.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**  
Equality Impact assessment will be undertaken if necessary.
- 4. Freedom of information**  
The paper is open.

### **Originator of the paper**

Dr Fiona Philippi, Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development  
08 January 2018

## **Task Group: CPD Framework for Doctoral Supervisors**

### **Proposed objectives and composition**

This paper sets out the proposed objectives and composition for a short life task group to be convened to look into the creation of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework for doctoral supervisors at the University. This action was approved by REC in the December 2017 meeting as part of the updates on the Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme. REC is requested to comment on and approve the proposal. If approved, the group will be convened in early 2018 and will submit a final report to REC in January 2019.

### **Background**

Although the University has a well-established system of mandatory supervisor briefings for new and continuing doctoral supervisors and a range of optional support for supervisors, there is no clear route of CPD for supervisors. Steps have been taken in semester 1 of 2017/18 to start to address this through a new IAD newsletter for supervisors and the establishment of a PGR supervisor network. However, a more comprehensive approach is now required to build on these initiatives, to ensure that the University is addressing recommendations made in ELIR 2015 and to maintain the University's position as a sector leader in doctoral supervision.

### **Proposed objectives**

- To identify existing CPD frameworks for supervisors in other institutions (both UK and internationally) in order to benchmark against examples of good practice
- To explore the viability of an online training resource for all supervisors
- To understand the particular needs and requirements for the University of Edinburgh supervisor body in terms of CPD
- To set out recommendations for the establishment of a CPD framework for supervisors

### **Considerations for the group (non-exhaustive)**

- Linking with the review of the Code of Practice, and particularly the 5 year rule for mandatory training
- ELIR recommendations
- Linking with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)
- Alignment with arrangements for CPD and support for other elements of academic role
- Supervisors at Associated Institutions and external supervisors

### **Proposed composition of the group**

Convenor: Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

College Deans or nominees for each College

Academic Services Representative

Careers Service Representative

Two experienced supervisors from different Schools

## **Update on Review of Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students – January 2018**

### **Executive Summary**

The paper provides an update on activity since September 2017 and proposes relocating some content from the Code of Practice into policy and regulations. It also provides an outline of proposed content topics for inclusion in the new Code of Practice. A suggested communications strategy for the new Code is also provided.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan objective of Leadership in Research and the Committee's priorities of Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development, and reviewing the Code of Practice.

### **Action requested**

Researcher Experience Committee (REC) is invited to discuss the proposals in Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the paper.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Any action in relation to policy and regulation content will require approval by Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. Any approved changes will be communicated as part of Academic Services' annual policy update.

Any action in relation to content for the new Code of Practice will be implemented by Academic Services.

A suggested communication strategy for the new Code of Practice is included in section 4.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Staff time in writing policy and regulation content for approval by CSPC will be met within existing resources as part of Academic Service core business.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

As the paper is for discussion, no risk assessment is included.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

An equality impact assessment is not required at this stage as the paper is for discussion. The paper proposes changes to strengthen regulations which should benefit all students and equality groups. However, the proposals at 2.1 and 2.2.3, if agreed, may constitute major change and further consultation and equality impact assessment would be required.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

The paper is open.

### **Originator of the paper**

Susan Hunter, Academic Services

03 January 2018

## Update on review of the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students – January 2018

### 1. Summary of discussion – 13 December 2017

Researcher Experience Committee (REC) agreed at its meeting on 26 September 2017 that the Convener, Vice-Convener and College Deans would meet to discuss potential policy content in the Code of Practice. This meeting took place on 13 December 2017 and a proposed approach to policy elements in the Code of Practice is outlined below.

The meeting also discussed the current definitions of supervision/supervisors and agreed that REC would be invited to have further discussion on the questions raised. These are outlined in Paper 3X.

The meeting also recognised that some Code of Practice content would best be addressed by the working group on continuing professional development for supervisors which will be taken forward by the Vice-Convener.

Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) has approval of regulatory content and proposed changes will need to be submitted to that committee in March 2018 to allow inclusion in the 2018/19 regulations.

### 2. Regulation and policy content – proposed approach

#### 2.1 [Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#)

##### **Regulation 35 Supervision**

Include a clear statement that supervision continues until the final thesis is submitted.

Include statement that Schools will make alternative arrangements when Principal Supervisor is absent for more than six weeks. [This should not be onerous where supervision teams are in place.]

Reword (d) to clarify that minimum number of meetings is two per three month period. Retain statement on student responsibility to maintain contact.

#### 2.2 [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

##### 2.2.1 **Regulation 6 Examiners: responsibilities**

In Application of the Regulation, include statement that College has responsibility to ensure examiners are aware of their responsibilities, the University's regulations and the recommendations available to examiners.

##### 2.2.2 **Regulation 13 Progression Review**

Include statement in 13.4 that Schools must ensure students are aware of what happens at progression review.

##### 2.2.3 **Regulation 14 Annual Progression Review Recommendation**

In Application of the Regulation, include statement that College committee will review all outcomes d – f.

2.2.4 Regulations 22 – 24 Examiner recommendations (PhD, PhD by Research Publications, MPhil)

In Application of the Regulation, include statement that examiners may tell students which regulatory outcome they will recommend to the College committee. Examiners will make clear to students that the recommendation is not a final decision. Examiners will make a clear recommendation to the College committee in terms of the available regulatory outcomes.

2.2.5 Regulation 36 Committee recommendation

In Application of the Regulation, include statement that if the College committee fails the degree the student will receive a written explanation of the decision. In these circumstances the College Postgraduate Dean or appropriate deputy will be available to talk with the student if requested.

2.3 [Withdrawal and Exclusion from Study Policy](#)

Propose that content relevant to postgraduate research students not already included in the policy is relocated from the Code to policy.

2.4 [Action for REC](#)

**REC is invited to consider the proposed additions to the Regulations outlined in section (2) in principle. If the committee is happy with the principles expressed, Academic Services will write regulatory content for approval by CSPC.**

3. [New Code of Practice Content Outline](#)

Also provided as Appendix 1 is a draft content outline for the new document. This is drawn from the findings from the focus groups led by Academic Services in 2016/17 and the gap analysis reported on to REC in September 2017 (Paper REC 17/18 1D). In addition, content on student wellbeing has been recommended for inclusion as outlined in Paper REC 17/18 2C submitted to the December meeting. Academic Services would also like to request some additional content on employment opportunities linking to the policy on Tutors and Demonstrators Recruitment, Support and Development.

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**Content for inclusion under “Other Information”**

**Part-time work during studies**

Part-time work is generally beneficial for student and employer alike, but good self-management is required to ensure that your research commitments are met, and a good work-life balance is maintained.

**The University will employ full-time postgraduate research students for no more than an average of 9 hours per week across the academic year (in line with its policy), and recommends that PGR students apply this limit to employment outside the University. PhD students should discuss any proposed employment within the University or with any other employer with their principal supervisor.**

If you are in receipt of any funding for your PhD, be sure to check what restrictions and conditions there are, if any, on the amount of part-time work you are allowed to

do. Most funders allow some part-time work, particularly in areas relevant to the students' research, and encourage a common sense approach to other paid work.

For students on Tier 4 visas, additional constraints on employment set by the UK Home Office will also apply. For more information, please see the [following guidance](#).

For more information on working during your studies, please visit: [Part-time and vacation work](#)

For the University's Policy for tutors and demonstrators, please visit: [Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators](#)

**Bullet point to be added under "Responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor"**

- Discuss with the student any proposed part-time employment.

### 3.1 Action for REC

**REC is invited to consider the proposed content outline, identify any additional content and agree the content topics for inclusion in the revised publication.**

## 4. Communicating with key stakeholders

The proposed changes to streamline the content in the Code of Practice will mean substantial differences to the document. This will require clear communication to key stakeholders such as supervisors, postgraduate research students, Graduate School Directors and professional support staff.

Existing communication channels include College postgraduate committees and postgraduate administrative forums, the Postgraduate Research Supervisors Network, the Students' Association Postgraduate Research and School Reps, Academic Services' annual policy update.

To facilitate communication from within existing resources the following communication strategy could be implemented:

Channel	Communicator
College postgraduate committees	College REC representatives
College postgraduate administrative forums	College REC representatives/Academic Services via College postgraduate admin contacts
Postgraduate Research Supervisors Network	REC Vice-Convener, IAD, Academic Services
Annual policy update	Academic Services

Communication with postgraduate research students could also be achieved through the Students' Association's Postgraduate Research and School Rep networks as well as through College postgraduate committees. It may also be possible to include an article in the postgraduate research student newsletter.

#### 4.1 Action for REC

**REC is invited to consider whether the proposed communication channels are appropriate and identify any other opportunities for communicating with key stakeholders.**

Susan Hunter

03 January 2018

Content outline for revised Code of Practice for Supervisors & Research Students

## Postgraduate Research Supervision Handbook

- Roles & Responsibilities
  - Supervisors
    - Principal/Lead Supervisor
    - Co-Supervisor
    - Assistant Supervisor
  - Students
- Student-Supervisor Relationship
  - Contact & key meetings
  - Annual progression monitoring
  - What happens if the supervisory relationship breaks down
- Resolving Problems
  - Absences
  - Interruptions
  - Extensions
  - Special Circumstances
  - Withdrawal
- Other information

Signposting where to find information on:

  - Assessment
  - Thesis preparation/submission/resubmission
  - Annual progression review
  - Programme handbooks
  - Student Support Services
  - Wellbeing resources (see Paper REC 17/18 2C)
  - Training & support for students and supervisors (IAD)
  - Fees and funding
  - Degree regulations

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**Supervisor roles – discussion paper**

**Executive Summary**

The paper is provided to stimulate discussion on the University's supervisory arrangements and consideration of supervisory roles.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan objective of Leadership in Research and the Committee's priorities of Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development, and reviewing the Code of Practice.

**Action requested**

Researcher Experience Committee (REC) is invited to consider supervisory roles and whether a broader consultation exercise should be undertaken.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

No action is associated with the paper which is provided to stimulate discussion.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

No resource implications are associated with the paper which is provided to stimulate discussion.

**2. Risk assessment**

As the paper is for discussion, no risk assessment is included.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

The paper does not propose any change to existing policy and no equality impacts are identified at this stage.

**4. Freedom of information**

The paper is open.

**Originator of the paper**

Dr Fiona Philippi, Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development  
Susan Hunter, Academic Services  
03 January 2018

## Supervisor roles – discussion paper

This paper is provided to stimulate discussion on supervision and consideration of whether there is a need for simplification and clarification of supervisory roles. The current Postgraduate Degree Regulations (Regulation 35 Supervision) describe two types of supervisory arrangements:

“Principal Supervisor plus Assistant Supervisor (or supervisors if more than one), and Co-Supervisors, one of whom is designated the Lead Supervisor. The former option is the usual arrangement, but the latter option may be chosen when it is clear that the student’s work involves interdisciplinary research.”

### Background

In November 2017, the concept of all supervision as co-supervision was discussed at the Postgraduate Research Supervisors Network where discussion included University terminology for supervisors: Principal, Lead, Assistant and Co-Supervisor. The supervisors who attended were unclear on what the differences were in terms of roles and responsibilities and raised the question of whether all supervision is in fact co-supervision. Supervisory roles were also discussed by Researcher Experience Committee members in relation to reviewing the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students. The meeting on 13 December including the Researcher Experience Committee (REC) Convener, Vice-Convener and College Deans to discuss policy content in the Code of Practice identified supervisory roles as a topic for further discussion by Researcher Experience Committee (see also Paper REC 17/18 3D).

Any changes to the roles and responsibilities of supervisors, or changes to regulatory descriptions of supervisory arrangements would need appropriate consultation.

### Action for REC

**REC is invited consider the supervisory arrangements as described in the Postgraduate Degree Regulations. Some questions are included below to stimulate discussion.**

**REC is invited to consider whether a broader consultation exercise on supervision should be undertaken and how this might be achieved.**

### Discussion questions:

- Is all supervision co-supervision?
- What are the differences between the roles and responsibilities of Assistant and Co-Supervisors at the University of Edinburgh?
- Under what conditions does a Co-Supervisor/Assistant Supervisor become eligible to be a Principal Supervisor or lead supervisor?

- Is there a difference between a “Lead” and “Co-Supervisor” in terms of roles and responsibilities?
- Is the key difference in responsibility of a Principal Supervisor that of an administrative role (for example applying for interruption or extension to a student’s period of study)?
- What are the roles, responsibilities and University’s expectations of external supervisors?

Dr Fiona Philippi, Head of Doctoral Education, Institute for Academic Development

Susan Hunter, Academic Services

03 January 2018

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## **Service Excellence, Student Administration & Support Update**

### **Executive Summary**

Dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017, this paper provides a brief update of the work being undertaken by the Student Administration & Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme, as part of a commitment to ensure that the Senate Committees are appraised of progress across each of these projects.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The Service Excellence Programme has been identified as a strategic priority.

### **Action requested**

To note (no requested action at this stage).

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Future Service Excellence Programme recommendations will be communicated by the Board through existing committee structures. Future SA&S project proposals will be routed through Researcher Experience Committee, Learning & Teaching Committee, Quality Assurance Committee or Curriculum & Student Progression Committee as necessary.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

**1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

N/A at this stage.

**2. Risk assessment**

SA&S aren't identifying risks for consideration at this stage.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

N/A at this stage.

**4. Freedom of information**

Open

### **Key words**

Service Excellence Programme / Student Administration & Support

### **Originator of the paper**

Neil McGillivray

Student Administration & Support Programme Lead

20<sup>th</sup> December 2017

**DEC 2017: UPDATE ON SERVICE EXCELLENCE (STUDENT ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT)**

The Student Administration & Support (SA&S) Programme's proposed programme of work (emerging from previous CSA and OBC phases) has been endorsed by the Service Excellence Board and the team are now working on a number of projects.

The Programme's vision encompasses a vision for professional services staff, academic staff, students and the University

- For students – from pre-arrival to graduation: Smooth. Seamless. Easy to navigate. "My way"
- For professional services staff: Fewer, better systems so less manual processing and fewer work arounds. Less duplicated effort. Better data. Clarity over who is responsible for what.
- For academic staff: Better admin support for you / your students. Less admin for you.
- For all staff and students: Clear, easy to understand policies
- For the University: Better Value for Money

The SA&S Board last met on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017. That meeting endorsed the work of the following projects, asking them to return to the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018 Board with fully developed business case and blueprint documentation:

- Special Circumstances, Extension and Concessions
- Working & Study Away
- Student Immigration Service

The SA&S team has subsequently committed to attending the January CPSC meeting to highlight emerging policy recommendations, although is aware that this meeting is scheduled to take place prior to the final 15<sup>th</sup> February presentation and discussion of these proposals.

Further blueprint recommendations in the following areas will be submitted to the 10<sup>th</sup> April SA&S Board:

- Student Finance
- Timetabling

SA&S testing of an Examination Timetabling solution will continue into the New Year, seeking a solution for implementation for all centrally arranged exams before the end of 2017/18.

The recruitment of additional seconded expertise into the SA&S team to support Timetabling and PGR is ongoing, with new colleagues expected to join the team in early February 2018, in support of Phase 3 of the programme:

- Creating systems, tools and processes to support the PGR lifecycle (including recording Annual Reviews and HEAR data)
- A major project to provide a single, golden-copy, data source for all Programme and course information, to clarify associated business processes for creation and update, and to provide tools by which the golden-copy data is used to publish key Programme and course information.
- Delivery of a transparent online matriculation process that guides a student through the steps they must complete (including a fee payment stage) in order to be fully matriculated.
- Create systems and tools to support the business processes involved in running Exam Boards.

- Redesign, simplify and standardise the processes for internal reporting through the creation of a single data warehouse and creating a user-centred interface to support day-to-day reporting requirements in Colleges and Schools.
- Completion of earlier work to support the Graduation process by introducing e-ticketing for Graduation (and eliminating inefficient manual processing).
- Various other investigations are planned, including into Online Course Selection, Course Assessment and Feedback tools, and the possibility of a digital document management system to support exam processes from setting questions to marking scripts.

More detail is available on the SA&S wiki, this will continue to be adapted and maintained throughout the coming months, and into the next phase of the programme as detailed proposals are developed for future projects:

<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=346121562>

REC: 16.01.18

H/02/26/02

**REC 17/18 3G**

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## **Report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee**

### **Executive Summary**

To update Senate on certain matters considered by the Knowledge Strategy Committee at its meeting on 13 October 2017.

### **How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

Not applicable.

### **Action requested**

Senate is invited to note the report.

### **How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

Not applicable.

### **Resource / Risk / Compliance**

#### **1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

Where applicable, as covered in the report.

#### **2. Risk assessment**

Where applicable, as covered in the report.

#### **3. Equality and Diversity**

Where applicable, as covered in the report.

#### **4. Freedom of information**

This paper is open.

### **Key words**

Knowledge Strategy Committee

### **Originator of the paper**

Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services, January 2018

**REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE****13 October 2017****1 Digital Transformation**

The Deputy Chief Information Officer delivered a presentation on the University's digital transformation activities – the application of digital technology in all aspects of the University. Updates on underpinning digital transformation projects were noted and student focused projects and communications to Schools and Colleges discussed.

**2 Distance Learning at Scale**

The Senior Vice-Principal presented an update on the current status of the Distance Learning at Scale project, with 13 potential pilot courses identified and business cases in development. The following points were discussed:

- Courses will be research-led and distinctive to the University of Edinburgh;
- 'Unbundling' – opportunities for students to progress at varying rates according to their own preference without the constraint of the standard academic year model;
- Providing appropriate student support tailored to large-scale distance learning courses.

**3 Bulk Email Investigation**

The Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning presented a report on the investigation into a graduation email error in June 2017. Future actions and lessons learned were noted, including a review of email templates, the timing of potentially sensitive emails and considering which emails require human review before issuing. Members discussed avoiding issuing emails on Fridays and examples at other organisations such as secondary education exam boards.

**4 Information Security Policy & Framework**

A revised Information Security Policy and a proposed Information Security Framework with supporting standards and procedures were reviewed. Improving communication to staff and students, mandatory awareness training for all staff and replacing an existing code of

practice were discussed. The revised Information Security Policy was endorsed, with approval of underlying standards for the Information Security Framework delegated to IT Committee.

## **5 Digital Research Services**

The Director of IT Infrastructure presented the proposed 2017/18 Digital Research Services project programme. The programme's intention to develop and maintain a comprehensive and integrated suite of digital services for University researchers was noted and avoiding duplication of long term research data storage was discussed. The programme of work and expenditure was approved as set out in the paper.

## **6 Learning Analytics Update**

Linkages between the development of a new learning analytics policy with the new General Data Protection Regulation and distance learning at scale programme were considered. It was agreed to delay developing a detailed learning analytics policy until later in 2017-18 and to introduce interim governance arrangements as proposed in the paper with immediate effect. Developing case studies or examples to assist Schools with interpretation of a new policy was requested.

## **7 Data Stewards**

The Committee endorsed the:

- Catalogue of golden copy data sources, including data steward appointments for the core golden copy data sources;
- Formal definition of the data steward role;
- Proposal that Heads of Colleges and Support Groups should be accountable for appointing Data Stewards in their locales, in line with their overall accountability for information security.

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## Research Policy Group (RPG) Report

### Executive Summary

#### 1) Industrial Strategy Green paper from Westminster Government

RPG received a presentation from the CEO of Edinburgh Innovations (ERI's new name since it was restructured) on the Green paper and the consequent challenges and opportunities that this presents to the University. The Industrial Strategy is in line with Westminster's commitment to supporting major interdisciplinary themes that address big challenges for the UK, such as the Aging Society, Clean Growth etc. The challenge is getting sufficient well informed intelligence so that we have proposals already in development when new major calls for research proposals are announced by UK Research and Innovation.

#### 2) REF2021

No new policy developments since the last summary. Three members of the University have been appointed as chairs of the one of the 34 Unit of Assessment subpanels. The Four main panel chairs were appointed several months ago and include Prof John Iredale whom REC members will recall was a senior member of staff in MVM until he moved to become pro VC at Bristol in 2016. The Subpanel chairs who are University staff are: Prof Moira Whyte (UoA 1 Clinical Medicine); SVP Charlie Jeffery (UoA 19 Politics & International Studies); Prof Greg Walker (UoA27 English Language & Literature). Edinburgh and Ulster are the only Universities in the UK & N Ireland to have staff appointed to 3 subpanel chairs. Just before the University closed for Christmas, Governance & Strategic Planning (GaSP) submitted to Universities Scotland the names put forward by the Colleges as potential nominees as panel members. HEIs are not allowed to make nominations themselves and nominations are made by various bodies that the four UK HE funding agencies consider to be relevant to the Research, such as the Royal Society etc but these bodies of which Universities Scotland are one had canvass members to ask them to suggest names of suitably eminent staff.

#### 3) Responsible Use of Research Metrics

RPG agreed that a small group should be convened to consider whether RPG should recommend to the University Executive that we join a growing number of Research Intensive University in the UK, EU and USA and sign up to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment. DORA prompts good practice in research assessment covering grant review, hiring and promotion etc so that the focus in assessment research quality is on the research itself not where it is published. The League of European Research Universities of which the University is a member, is already signed up to DORA.

**4) Research Integrity**

GaSP, Research Support office and HR are continuing to work together so that the HR policy on Research Misconduct updated and is in line with good practice as recommended by the UK Research Integrity Office. Our procedures are having to be updated so that we will be able to report to UK Research and Innovation and other funders that we have an informal allegations of research misconduct as well as formal allegations where this is a condition of funding. It is clear that this expectation to report that an informal allegations is being investigated will not start under internal investigations have concluded that the allegation is not motivated by malicious action nor it what would be described as vexatious. RSO, HR and GaSP are also developing a comms strategy so that the new policy is known and understood and help from IAD has been requested as getting the policy known to staff is vital.

**How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?**

The paper aligns with the University's Strategic Plan Objective of Excellence in Research.

**Action requested**

None – the paper is for information only.

**How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?**

No action is associated with the paper.

**Resource / Risk / Compliance****1. Resource implications (including staffing)**

None – the paper is for information only.

**2. Risk assessment**

Not required as the paper is for information only.

**3. Equality and Diversity**

Equality and diversity issues in relation to the paper are considered by Research Policy Group.

**4. Freedom of information**

The paper is **open**

**Originator of the paper**

Dr Susan Cooper, Senior Strategic Planner

Governance and Strategic Planning

8 January 2018