



**RKE Committee Meeting minutes  
Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2.00 pm  
Paterson's Land G21**

**Present**

- Professor Sheila Riddell (SR) - Convener & Director of Research
- Dr Yvonne Foley (YF) - Lecturer in Language Education
- Dr Gillean McCluskey (GM) - Head of Institute ECS/ Deputy Director of CREID
- Dr Sarah McGeown (SM) - Co-Deputy Head of ECS
- Dr Evelyn McGregor (EM) - Director of Postgraduate Studies - ECS
- Professor Grant Jarvie (GJ) - Chair of Sport, SPEHS
- Professor David Raffe (DR)- Deputy Director RKE/Centre Director – CES
- Ms Janis Sugden (JS)– Centre Director – SSC
- Dr Simon Temperley (ST) – RKE Officer
- Ms Lesley Thomson (LT)- RKE Administrator

**1. Apologies and Introductions**

**Apologies Given**

- Dr Sian Bayne – Convenor of Ethics Sub-committee
- Dr Jane Brown – Convener of School Conference Travel Committee
- Professor John Davis - Professor of Childhood Inclusion – ECS
- Professor Lani Florian - Bell Chair of Education - ETL
- Dr Shirley Gray – Research representative - SPEHS
- Professor Morwenna Griffiths - Research Representative - Institute for Education, Teaching and Leadership
- Professor Carolin Kreber - Professor of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
- Professor Nanette Mutrie - Chair in Physical Activity for Health – SPEHS
- Dr Robbie Nicoll - Head of the Institute, ETL
- Professor Lydia Plowman (LP) - Chair in Education and Technology - ECS
- Dr Pauline Padfield – Centre Director – STEP
- Dr John Ravenscroft - *Deputy Head of School and deputy*
- Dr Anne Stafford – Director of CRCP
- Professor Julie Taylor – NSPCC Chair in Child Protection
- Mr Graham Thomson – Academic Coordinator, CEL/SCSSA

Everyone present introduced themselves and SR welcomed ST to the Committee.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May**

Circulated as **Paper A**, checked and accepted with following correction:

- SR noted amendment to minutes following initial circulation by ST and EM noted that she had not been present at the meeting in respect of item 3, which referred to previous (February 2013) meeting.



### 3. Convener's Communications

- RKE Office now has 2.6FTEs, plus fixed term appointment for REF submission
- SR requested that those present consider research support events they would like to see introduced and report back later in meeting.
- Noted that final REF submission still to take place, though now very close to completion and the two MHSE led submissions (UoA25 and 26) are now with College.

### 4. REF 2014 Update- UoA25

Lydia Plowman submitted **Paper B** summarising UoA25 submission on which SR commented.

- Those present were reminded that papers B and C concerning REF UoA25 and 26 should not be taken from the meeting room, but handed back to ST for shredding.
- Following submission on 29th November, a full copy of the REF submission will be made available.
- SR commended Lydia Plowman on her efforts in leading on the preparation of the UoA25 submission.
- Noted that there was need to increase proportion of MHSE research active staff submitted in next REF but SR acknowledged that the University minimum standard for submissions meant that some PI previously returned in the 2008 RAE were effectively excluded from REF 2014.
- SR feels that submission in this UoA is strong overall, despite lower than average percentage of staff returned (in relation to College as a whole).
- DR commented that the weighting given to Research Impact is likely to increase from 25% to 30% in the next REF and SR suggested that researchers need to be made aware of the importance of maintaining a record of their research impact.
- EM suggested that ERI (Anne Sofie Laegran) could be invited to give a workshop concerning 'self-curating' methodology for research impact.
- LT commented that PURE will be a powerful tool to support recording of research impact.

### 5. REF update UoA 26

GJ spoke to the meeting concerning his paper summarising UoA26 submission (**Paper C**)

- Submission consists of 26 staff (23.8FTE)
- This includes collaborators from College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
- 3 Impact case studies felt to be strong
- SR requested that LP and GJ prepare a short paper highlighting issues that have occurred during REF.
- General discussion on the disbursement of resulting Research Excellence Grant concluded that matter requires further consideration post-submission.
- GJ commented that MHSE is a supportive environment for research and SM commented that future safeguarding of staff time to engage in research is highly important.



## 6. RKE Research Finance update

LT compiled and tabled **Paper D**: SR commended LT on quality and usefulness of reports:

- Summarising overall value of research funding applications and awards across all eleven colleges by monthly breakdown in 2012/13 versus totals for 11/12 also included for comparison.
- Update given on MHSE applications submitted and awarded for 2013/14 to date.
- More research awards in 2012/13 (33) than 2011/12 (24) but former of slightly lower overall value.
- SR pointed out need to compare performance with other CHSS Schools of similar size but LT cautioned interpretation of such because nature of business differs widely between Schools (e.g. Business School engages in a lot of consultancies compared to others).
- SR expressed concern that total award value in MHSE has dropped by 50% since 07/08 but acknowledged that this was due to a number of external factors not least of which is the current funding climate. Also LT pointed out that many research active staff responsible for attracting large research grants have retired or left since 2007/8.
- LT commented on general trend of research application activity very high in early part of 13/14 but has entered a less active phase compared to equivalent period in 2012/13.
- EM pointed out that research active staff not returned in REF2014 could perhaps have been encouraged to improve their REF impact profile (e.g. by increased publications).
- Reference made to adopting a research strategy whereby early stage researchers are encouraged to apply for smaller and less competitive funding, before trying for highly competitive streams such as Research Councils.
- SM commented that a full list of potential funders would be helpful, especially to those in the earlier stages of a research career. Agreed that RKE Office would look into providing such a list, where possible with a running timetable of annual deadlines for particular schemes. This could be based on an information feed from ERI.

**Action: ST to review provision**

## 7. Research Strategy

- **Paper E**, (extract from 2012/13 School plan) was tabled for discussion, but noted that this has since been superseded by 2013/14 plan.
- **Paper F** showed ERI Data from 22 School report presented, comparing research application success rates over recent years. Noted that MHSE award successes on increase compared to some other CHSS Schools.
- SR sounded caution on over-reliance on Scottish Government funding by MHSE and EM reinforced view, commenting that it can no longer be assumed that



government funding for some programmes would be renewed on a rolling basis.

- SR started a discussion on maintaining sustainability of research in MHSE. Essentially agreed that this should be achieved by a combination of recruitment strategy and support for/ encouragement of non-research active academic staff.
- GJ raised concerns over how future MHSE research performance might be judged against other Schools by a changing Institutional senior management.
- YF commented that academics without research experience lack confidence to write and submit proposals and DR suggested that lack of access to information on support developing research proposals is a large part of problem. SR pointed out that Lydia Plowman and some senior level researchers have been generous with their time in this regard (e.g. offering surgeries) and suggested that Professors' group should be the first point of contact for less experienced researchers in seeking mentorship. LT suggested that Professor's group could give a short presentation.

**Action: SR agreed to consider and discuss with Profs' group**

- Role of College level/ERI mentoring on how to develop research bids acknowledged as valuable, though School level programme of events also suggested.

**Action: SR and ST /RKE group to discuss developing a programme of events.**

- SR mentioned that the School sabbatical system is there to help give academic staff time to develop research portfolios by relieving them from teaching duties.
- Key role of Research Centres acknowledged in maintaining research profile of School, but SR highlighted their innate vulnerability because of largely being supported by fixed term grant funding.
- SM commented that it may be possible for centres to generate income through offering taught courses, citing Child Protection Research Centre's MSc programme, though SR recommended caution, saying that most courses do not generate significant income, but usually just seek to cover their costs.
- SR has asked ST to convene a Research Strategy Group meeting in which these issues will be addressed and has provided a list of names for ST to contact.

**Action: ST to contact individuals identified by SR to arrange meeting**

- LT raised concerns over possible under spending on some awards and SR concurred this state of affairs was unacceptable. Agreed that improved post award management was key to prevention.

## 8. Conference Travel Committee

- ST reported on figures provided by Shona Cunningham
- SR emphasised that conference attendance should where possible, lead to publication beyond conference itself (i.e. conference abstracts).
- Question raised over unclaimed monies and JS pointed out that most likely cause was that submitted abstracts were turned down for presentation at conference.



- Conference travel underspend prompted LT to raise question concerning unspent money from last round of MHSE Seed corn funding. 2013 call about to be issued with revised Guidance notes alerting applicants that they may lose funding that has not been spent within the academic year for which it was applied.

**Action: RKE Office to redraft terms of Seed corn funding and issue call**

### 10. Ethics Committee update

Paper G submitted by Sian Bayne:

- Summarising and comparing 11/12 with 12/13 applications to REC. Total applications up from 69 to 94.
- Applications per month by institute date also given.
- Seminar on child protection and ethical research held on 21st October 2013: It was delivered by Julie Taylor and Connie Smith from the Child Protection Research Centre. 46 people attended.

### 11. Research Centre Business

- No report submitted and agreed that Centre related business covered in other agenda items.

### 13. AOB

- Further discussion concerning research culture in the School.
- YF asked the committee to recognise the special challenge faced by the school in recruiting staff with well-developed teaching careers but little or no research experience. Strategies to increase number of research active academic staff and boost research were discussed, including:
  - Recruitment policy: hiring academic staff with proven research record.
  - SR noted that another round of Chancellor's Fellowships are imminent and aim would be for the School to use the scheme to recruit two more research active staff.
  - GJ suggested review and rationalisation of teaching commitments with a view to freeing up academic time for research.
  - SM suggested offering research Masters as a stepping stone for research competent students to advance to PhD.
- Date of next meeting is 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2014

**Action: ST organise venue and advertise**