Present: J Seckl (Chair), J Iredale, P Jones, H Macandrew, K Melia, A Mount, B Pegado (EUSA), L Plowman, S Riley, T Slaven

By Invitation: SJ Brown (Student Surveys), S Cranston (Records Management)

In attendance: S Cooper (Secretary), L Forsyth, P McGuire, J McMahon

Apologies: D Bruce (External member), R Williams

1. Note of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Group agreed the note of the previous meeting.

2. Report from the College of Humanities and Social Science

The Group discussed the report from HSS.

The layout of the report had improved since previous year. HSS had set up a review group to ensure compliance and promote good practice and were considering how to improve training provided to staff about ethics and integrity issues.

There was a general discussion about how ethics and integrity training should be delivered across the University, by whom, and how it should be targeted to have maximum benefit.

Action: For next year, H Macandrew, via the Research Ethics and Integrity Review Group (REIRG) to consider the best approach for the delivery of ethics and integrity training across the University.

3. Report from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

The Group discussed the report from MVM.

A mechanism now existed to review research proposals in which the subjects were healthy individuals in recognition of the fact that NHS review mechanisms were concerned with patients receiving treatment.

4. Report from the College of Science & Engineering

The Group discussed the report from CSE.

All Schools now had named points of contact for matters relating to Research Ethics and Integrity. Schools were being encouraged to learn from local examples of good practice, particularly in regard to how research ethics and integrity applied to research in which the subject(s) are not humans, animals or plants.

5. Way Forward for Research Integrity (including Ethics) at Edinburgh

H. Macandrew introduced Paper E.

The Research Integrity and Review Group had met several time since its establishment at the start of the 2014/15 session and a digest of the topics discussed was presented for information (Paper H). The group met bimonthly and was a vehicle for raising awareness of holistic nature of research ethics and integrity by promoting areas of good practice. It was intended that the group would report to RPG and annual reports from the Colleges would be considered the September RPG meeting from 2016 onwards.

The issue of how to deliver relevant training was a key theme for the group and discussions with IAD had already started.

It was recognised that there was an important overlap between matters pertaining to Social Responsibility & Sustainability and Research Ethics & Integrity. It would be necessary to determine where such discussions should take place within the context of the University governance structure.

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1 REIRG membership: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/research/research-integrity/reirg-members
Action | On H Macandrew, via the REIRG, to agree a format for annual College research ethics and integrity reports so that they are the basis for the University’s report to demonstrate compliance with the RCUK Concordat to support Research Integrity.

Action | On RPG secretary, to draft a revised RPG remit to reflect the formal inclusion of consideration of Research Ethics and Integrity as a regular part of RPG business with effect from the September meeting.

6 Report from the Student Survey Ethics Committee  
Paper F

The report was introduced by S J Brown.

The Student Survey Ethics Committee (SSEC) had considered far more requests for surveys than in previous years as a result of the Student Survey Unit becoming better known. There was a need to be mindful of overburdening students with surveys during the NSS.

A student panel had been established as an alternative means of canvassing students. Thanks to the responses from the student panel the Student Survey Unit were identifying those surveys that were within the scope of the SSEC but hadn’t been considered by them. Having identified the surveys that not been considered by SSEC the Student Survey Unit would inform the relevant School or support unit of the student survey approval process.

K Melia was thanked for her service as chair of the SSEC and it was noted that she would be stepping down.

Action | On S J Brown, to initiate discussions with EUSA and Survey Unit re regard to how to ensure that more surveys carried out by EUSA are considered by the Student Survey Ethics committee.

Action | On H Macandrew, to consider how the report from this committee can be integrated into the planned reporting arrangement for Research Ethics and Integrity.

7 Data Protection for Students  
Paper G

S Cranston spoke to her paper.

Action | On RPG secretary, to share S Cranston’s paper with Colleges asking them to relay the paper to Schools’ Teaching Organisations, Graduate Schools so that students, supervisors and Personal Tutors are aware.

8 Any Other Business

None