RESEARCH INFORMATION & IT SERVICES GOVERNANCE GROUP (RIISG)

MINUTES

Monday 4 November 2013, 11.30am-1.30pm, Room 106 Gordon House 29 Gordon Square WC1H 0PP

Present: Chair: Prof David Price (DP), Dr Paul Ayris (PA), Prof John Brodholt (JB), Prof Jon Butterworth (JBu) Dr Andrew Clark (AC), Prof Peter Coveney (PC), Hazel Crompton (HC), Dr Oliver Duke-Williams (ODW), Clare Gryce (CG), Prof Nik Kaltsoyannis (NK), Prof Angelos Michaelides (AM), Patrick Malcolm (PM), Gavin McLachlan (GM), Dr Jacky Pallas (JP), Andrew Smith (AS), Dr Jacob Sweiry (JS), Dr Andrea Townsend-Nicholson (AT-N), Dr Max Wilkinson (MW).

In attendance: Aaron Crompton

Secretary: Yvette Pople

Apologies: Prof David Balding, Prof Richard Catlow, Rabina Choudhry, Prof Anthony Finkelstein, Graham Hunt (GH), Prof Dipak Kalra, Prof Alan Johnston, Samuel Massiah, Martin Moyle, Prof Marek Zeibart

ACTION

1. Welcome and apologies
   1.1 The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2013
   2.1 The minutes were approved as a correct record.

3. IT Governance including the new Research IT Executive (David Price)
   3.1 The Research IT Governance Structure, Terms of Reference and the meeting agenda/slide deck had been amended and recirculated.

   3.2 It was noted that the word “working” was removed from the four groups established to look at day to day operational issues within Research IT in support of the work of RIISG. The newly formed Research IT Executive, which has its first meeting in September, will work on the detail or strategy and the domain programme plan (as fed from the Research domain groups) and then make a recommendation for approval by the RIISG. The RIISG would report to the Information Services Governance Committee (ISGC) and meet once a term.

   3.3 DP explained that a further three domain groups, (not research specific) known as Infrastructure & Common Shared IT (IISG), Administrative Services (ASSG) and Learning and Teaching (LTSG) would report to the ISGC.

4. Financial capitalisation (Gavin McLachlan)
   4.1 GM informed the group that a more detailed explanation would be presented at the Senior Management Team (SMT) on 14 November to make a decision to go ahead with the ISD capital budget of £11 million for fiscal year 2013/14. It was noted that the SMT would review the funds for the year at its meeting on 28 November.

   4.2 A special meeting of the ISGC will take place on 20 November to look at UCL’s four year financial plan forecast. GM mentioned that Research IT had put in a proposal for a four year investment plan, not just for IT investment but for the University as a whole in terms of long term future planning and investment in security.

   4.3 DP congratulated the RITS team with the work they produced with the auditors.

5. Datacentre update and Governance (Gavin McLachlan)
   5.1 GM presented the updated Datacentre Governance Structure which showed the expansion of the membership of the Datacentre working group reporting to the IISG. A user forum would be established comprising of members from the IT Managers forum and will report to the Datacentre working group.

   5.2 GM confirmed that the long term two tier strategy encompassing both an onsite and offsite Datacentre had not changed. He summarised the critical time lines before HS2 takes possession of Wolfson House for demolition in January 2016. It was noted that HS2 wants to sign a legal agreement ahead of time. A meeting had taken place on 28 October with HS2 to plan the location (in conjunction with Estates), purchase, build and move of a new Datacentre. HS2 agreed to pay for the cost, equivalent to the compensation for the destruction of the Wolfson House Centre. Risk register would be reviewed quarterly.
6. RII SG Research IT Strategy (Gavin McLachlan)

6.1 As part of UCL’s vision to become one of the very top comprehensive research universities in the world, GM reiterated the aims of the Research IT Strategy (leadership, cross disciplinary, impact and e-Infrastructure) and the key Research IT Principles (divide strategy along key e-infrastructure domains, addressing the needs, accessibility and usability for UCL industrial partners). It was imperative to demonstrate the impact of Research IT, and the usage of Research IT to get grants and publications.

6.2 A proposed set of objectives focussing on the e-infrastructure domains of the Research Computing Platforms, Research Data and Research Applications had been included in the four year investment plan. GM welcomed any comments and input.

7. Research Computing & Research SW Development Strategy (Clare Gryce)

7.1 CG outlined the research computing strategic objectives as below:

a. Offer a fully scalable research computing facility for use by researchers across faculties
b. Continue to increase the size of UCL’s research computing capacity

c. Offer a research computing facility to support the increasing diversity of research activities across UCL
d. Offer training to promote best practise and effective use of research computing services by researchers (staff & students)
e. Offer an integrated HPC service that provides a wide variety of different facilities across the breadth of research needs
f. Continue to develop UCL’s regional research computing capability to be more usable and optimise cross-site management and delivery processes
g. Position UCL to be best placed to win Research IT funding by itself or through collaborative partnerships or consortiums

7.2 CG mentioned that more resources were needed to expand the training programme currently being developed and rolled out by the group. It was hoped that funding from one or more successful CDT bids would provide funds for this. With regard to the regional research computing capability, the IRIDIS system now comprised 12,000 cores hosted at Southampton with a 50% share of the machines to UCL.

7.3 It was noted that there was a genuine enthusiasm and support for the prioritisation of training and skills development from funders. A mechanism was needed within UCL with a terms of reference for gathering requirements in a structured way for faculties to feed into and across the institution. CG to look into opportunities to gain extra funding and formalise a business case.

7.4 CG outlined the research software development strategic objectives as below:

a. Offer collaborative research software development services
b. Offer training to promote best practise by researches (staff & students) who are developing code across the faculties
c. Offer centrally managed infrastructure and tools to support best practise version control and issue tracking, testing and continue integration
d. UCL researchers to use external HPC platforms and new architectures, made easy

A meeting will be held at the end of the year to discuss progress.


8. Research Data Strategy (Max Wilkinson)

8.1 MW outlined the strategic objectives as below:

a. Answer the critical need for research storage for researchers at UCL
b. Align with the funding bodies and RCIK data principles
c. Implement business models to share and make it sustainable the research data costs fairly and transparently among all stakeholders
d. Provide secure data facilities (Data Save Haven) that meets the requirements of NHS and other data providers
e. Provide secure, managed, stored scalable data and high bandwidth networking

8.2 MW explained the need to identify the storage stakeholders and outline their responsibilities. The central concept of a project requiring storage was used to encourage a change in data management practice. The UCL Research Data Policy included a bold consideration to waive rights to data in a long term archive. It was important to maintain the communication strategy key with a view to managing the service expectations for three years.
8.3 MW summarised the Phase 2 Expansion of the piloting capacity and the development of the archives.

8.4 DP addressed the need for an Institutional Policy to be developed which is not a Research Council Policy. Budget schemes needed to be looked at for front loading of archiving costs in supporting evidence of research. Budget lines to be put into place. It was questioned how the research data would be paid for in the long-term.

9. Research Applications Strategy (Gavin McLachlan)

9.1 GM outlined the strategic objectives as below:
   a. Improve collaboration and funding opportunities through showcasing UCL researchers and research themes/activities
   b. Foster the ability for researchers to collaborate and share information with each other and their worldwide partners
   c. Allow wide scale dissemination and use of UCL research outputs (UCL publishing)
   d. Improve management of research activities (allowing UCL to utilise its cross disciplinary grants)
   e. Help UCL to achieve research funding targets

9.2 It was agreed to set up a specific meeting to present RIM and the Research application agenda to the new Provost.

9.3 GM summarised the budget planning main areas in Research Applications as outlined below:
   - 2013-14 - Phase 1: RIM requirements and design (£250k), Ref 2014 Submission Support system (£157k), IRIS Phase v (£50k), Lamis Stock Control (£150k + £50k of Dept funding)
   - 2014-15 – Phase 2: RIM implementation, Pfact replacement & RIM “corer” (£400k), Strategic Partnership System (£150k), Benchmarking Implementation PH1 (£200k), Open access compliance & UCL Publishing (£150 + £100k Dept), IRIS Phase VI (£80k), LAMIS Service (ISD AS Dept Apps) (2014-2017), RPS/Dataset Integration (£90k), Funding Council Reporting System (£90k), eLabnotebook evaluation (£30k), Equipment Database (£50k + £50k EPSRC)
   - 2015-16 – Phase 3: RIM implementation + added modules and functions (£300k), Benchmarking Implementation PH2 (£100k), Open access compliance & UCL Publishing £100 + £50k Dept, Researcher Collaboration (£150k), eLabnotebook rollout PH1 (£250k)
   - 2016-17 – Phase 4: RIM implementation + fold in RPS and IRIS (£300k), Ref 2020 Submission Support System (£50k), Researcher Collaboration (£100k), eLabnotebook rollout PH2 (£150k)

9.4 DP questioned how the budget would work and whether UCL would look at bids or figures. GM had mentioned that 2-3million a year would be invested in Research IT (no investment had been made previously) and this would translate into 11/12million capital IT investment in ISD. GM mentioned that although there were high level budget assumptions to begin with for the three year forecast, this could change.

10. Action Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Minute</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.5.6</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Discuss HPC strategy for 2012/2013</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
<td>Delegated to RC Governance Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.8.2</td>
<td>G.H</td>
<td>Research Accelerator – Liaise with Kate Oliver Engineering Faculty re promotion strategy</td>
<td>ONGOING</td>
<td>To be completed in 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.5.7</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td>Research Network – Gavin McLachlan to deliver a report on the current and future planning Research Network and Research Network Strategy.</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CG</td>
<td><strong>Long term RC Strategy and roadmap</strong> – Clare Gryce to provide and updated and long term Research Computing strategy and roadmap for consideration.</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS</td>
<td>With RC Governance Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.5.7</td>
<td><strong>The Research Network map</strong>: Gavin McLachlan to liaise with Prof Alan Smith, Department of Space and Climate Physics to discuss HPC access problems for MSSL.</td>
<td>ONGOING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>1.5.1</td>
<td><strong>Business Case</strong>: Look at the plan for the scalable HPC project and see whether the project can be phased across fiscal year boundaries to help smooth the spike in costs</td>
<td>ONGOING</td>
<td>GM in current discussions with UCL Finance Division</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>1.5.5</td>
<td><strong>ISD capital budget for fiscal year 2013/2014</strong>: Produce a phased plan of projects for the next quarter to be circulated to members for input.</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Next RIISG meeting
11.1 This will be held on Monday 20 January 12noon-1.30pm in G12 Council Room, South Wing, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.