**RESEARCH INFORMATION & IT SERVICES GOVERNANCE GROUP MINUTES**

Monday 20 January, 12noon-2pm, G12 Council Room, South Wing, Gower Street London WC1E 6BT

**RIISG Present:** Chair: Prof David Price (DP), Dr Paul Ayris (PA), Prof David Balding (DB), Prof John Brodholt (JB), Prof Richard Catlow (RC), Dr Andrew Clark (AC), Prof Peter Coveney (PC), Prof Angelos Michaelides (AM), Samuel Massiah (SM), Gavin McLachlan (GM), Dr Jacky Pallas (JP), Andrew Smith (AS), Dr Jacob Sweiry (JS), Dr Andrea Townsend-Nicholson (AT-N), Prof Marek Zeibart (MZ),

**Apologies:** Prof Jon Butterworth, Dr Oliver Duke-Williams, Prof Anthony Finkelstein, Prof Dipak Kalra, Prof Nik Kaltsoyannis, Dr Sinead Kennedy, Patrick Malcolm,

**In attendance:** David Beavan (DB) - in place of Dr Oliver Duke-Williams), Ben Waugh (BW) – in place of Prof Jon Butterworth

**ISD Present:** Clare Gryce (CG), Secretary: Yvette Pople (YP)

**Apologies:** Rabina Choudhry, Graham Hunt, Dr Max Wilkinson

**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 November and Matters Arising**
   2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November were approved by the Board.

   The Action Points were noted as follows:-
   - Long term RC Strategy and roadmap (24.01.12 – minute 1.5.8): Completed
   - Research Accelerator (24.01.12 – minute 1.8.2): Closed. Future planning at Research Computer Working Group
   - Business Case (18.02.13 – minute 1.5.5): Consolidating bids and planning for the scalable HPC project to be phased across fiscal year
   - ISD Capital budget for fiscal year 2013/14 (04.06.13 – minute 1.9.3): On the agenda.
   - Budget – three year forecast (04.11.13 - minute 9.4): DP has written to the new Provost with a request for information on the application tools which are currently being used at Leeds. Feedback to be given to RIM.

   2.2 It was noted that funding needs to be found within UCL for the increase in JANET costs resulting from the JISC funding changes.

   2.3 CG asked for comments on the proposal to develop a long term Research Computing Strategy which encompassed both Research Computing Platforms and Research Software Development. It was agreed that actions would be taken forward.

3. **Financial update**
   3.1 GM reported that the ISD Capital financing had finally been approved as £11M, having existed as £6.6M for half the fiscal year. He very much appreciated the effort, and support from the RIISG and other governance members that had gone in to arriving at this position.

   The Provost’s SMT agreed “in principle” a three year planning cycle for IT projects with £11M of annual funding going forward for Fiscal years 14/15, 15/16 and 16/17.

   **CG**
Although there were no guarantees, it was felt that the long term financial planning for major investment programmes should be treated as an assumption that doesn’t need examining or debated year on year.

3.2 Questions regarding the alignment of the approvals process for Capital and Recurrent bids were raised. It was noted that if Capital bids were approved and associated Recurrent bids were not approved, then this would place a risk on the ability the gain value from the capital investment. Finance and ISD will seek to address these issues. Clarification was sought regarding the position when large capital items required an uneven spend profile over the three years. It was recognised for 14/15 that all recurrent uplifts not approved a year in advance can be requested through SMT.

3.3 GM distributed the three year draft Research Strategy Plan and asked the members for comments.

4. Revised capital programme FY2013/14

4.1 This was submitted by Research IT Executive for final approval by RIISG and aligned against the original £11M proposed spend.

4.2 GM outlined the proposal for the final agreed allocation of additional funds for this fiscal year FY 2013/14 which translated to £1.73M of cash spend with one exception, being the Research Data Index Service. This project would have been unable to complete within the MRC funding deadline of 31 March. Therefore it was agreed with the MRC to reallocate the £130k funding to other Farr projects and to have a commitment later to perform this project using RIISG money.

4.3 GM also mentioned that the negotiations with JANET had completed on the fibre link to MSSL. With the increase of funding for FY 2013/14, this project is moving ahead with completion expected by Summer. This will link the MSSL Dorking campus directly to UCL on the JANET backbone and allow for much improved and resilient connectivity.

5. Operational report and KIPs

5.1 GM circulated the Operational monthly report and KIPs for information and asked the RIISG to review the content, quality and comment on what additional information was needed. The following points were noted:

5.2 • Research Data: It was agreed that ISD should provide simpler diagrams to show the data usage across Faculties. Data is produced by different groups and it was noted that a more unified data/slide deck with common fields will be produced at the next meeting. It was noted that DP wanted some statistics on compliance progress, particularly against the EPSRC, Research Data storage and public access. With the new research data storage system going live earlier this year, clarification was sought on whether a Communications Strategy existed. It was confirmed this is being piloted and will be on the agenda for the next Data Governance Group to make a University wide announcement. It was requested that access to publications and how this will be dealt with be brought to the next meeting.

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5.3 • Research Computing: CG to look at simplifying data extracted from the Computational Resource Allocation Group (CRAG), refine it and make it more consistent. UCL’s increasing dependence on Iridis was noted. The issues with driving engagement with SMEs were discussed, noting that the Cfi is operating on ‘bare bones’ staffing. Plans for the joint post with UCL Enterprise were progressing with confirmation of named resource and a proposed roadmap expected soon. It was noted there was a need to show the breakdown of the industrial users across Emerald.

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5.4 • Research Applications: It was noted that the RPS/IRIS Faculty Engagement trend needs to be developed. JS requested the IRIS breakdown by category of staff. AT mentioned that there could be some automatic information from teaching hours within IRIS and it was noted that Biosciences would really like this to appear in IRIS. The IRIS Project Board to make decisions and identify what could go into IRIS profile that is visible to people, different functions, and give feedback in providing new data.
6. **HPC investment comparison**

6.1 CG summarised the UCL HPC Investment trend and comparisons between 2009-13. This showed a decline in investment against a trend of steadily increasing use. It was noted there was a need for refresh/expansion cycles to be driven by user needs and technology change rather than by purely financial considerations. It was reported that Groups in Engineering were making regular use of commercial cloud providers for irregular workload patterns (peaks and troughs). It was argued that more data was needed to support the business case for £1M per year investment in HPC.

7. **Three year strategy plan – hand out**

7.1 GM gave an overview of the draft three year strategy plan and asked the RIISG for feedback. A third of the allocation to ISD of £11M was suggested to be allocated to Research IT which would ultimately be decided at ISGC. The draft allocation was based on discussion with the Governance Group and Working Groups. The following points were highlighted:

- Implementation of a new annual application process for publications
- RIM development to enable a more effective management of the research process
- Open access compliance to be extended and not stopped after two years
- ISD should provide some information on the ROI of large projects, This would include information such as number of grants supported or total research income supported through the service.

7.2 It was agreed that GM should create an Executive Summary paragraph for each major project and include at the end of April a revised Strategy paper to be sent to the RIISG and Vice Dean for Research for comment.

8. **Timetable for project bids for FY 2014/15**

8.1 GM summarised the 2014 timetable for project bids as follows:-

- **Jan-Feb:** A series of Working Groups and Governance to meet and solicit bid ideas
- **End Feb:** Bid ideas to be submitted to GM
- **Mar-Apr:** Governance/Working Groups to meet and revise their bids for their domains
- **Mid May:** Final copy of bids to be submitted with each proposed domain programme
- **End May:** RITE to meet to create Research IT Capital programme and propose final domain allocations
- **2 June:** RIISG to meet to discuss and approve the £3M expenditure for the Research IT Capital programme recommended by RITE
- **18 June:** ISGC to meet and approve the full ISD Capital portfolio.

9. **Vision Statement for RITS**

9.1 A Vision Statement for RITS had been developed by the Department staff and GM and CG asked RIISG for comment. In summary, the vision statement is intended to outline where the Department wants to be in the future, to be used as an aspirational statement and source of inspiration.

9.2 The following statement was agreed subject to a couple of amendments.

> “Our Vision is to provide world-class IT services and technological innovation that enables accelerates and transforms UCL’s research.

> We aim to be the IT partner of choice for all UCL researchers and affiliates, recognised for the skills, knowledge and expertise of our people, and our open and collaborative approach to our work”.

> The reference to people and skills was welcomed by the group. It was suggested that the statement should include a reference to UCL research and impact”

10. **Action Points**

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24.01.12</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 for next meeting</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>18.04.12</td>
<td>1.5.1</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td>Research Network map – Gavin McLachlan to liaise with Prof Alan Smith, Dept of Space &amp; Climate Physics to discuss HPC access problems for MSSL.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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3. 20.01.14.  5.2 & 5.3  GM/CG  **Operational report**  
*Research Data* - simpler diagrams to show data usage across Faculties and a more unified data slide deck as with *Research Computing*.  
*Research Applications* – IRIS breakdown by category of staff

4. 20.01.14  7.2  GM  **Three year strategy plan** – Gavin McLachlan to produce a summary paragraph for each major project with a revised Strategy paper to be sent to RIISG & Vice Dean for Research for comment

11. **Next RIISG meeting – to discuss and approve the £3M expenditure**
11.1 The next meeting will take place on Monday 2 June from 12.30pm until 2pm in Room 106, Gordon House, 29 Gordon Square, London WC1H OPP.