



RESEARCH IT EXECUTIVE (RITE)

Monday 19th January 2015: 14.00-16.00
Ground Floor Meeting Room, 2 Taviton Street

Chair:

David Price [DP]

Present:

Andrew Clark [AC]; Clare Gryce [CG]; Sinead Kennedy [SK]; Gavin McLachlan [GM]; Martin Moyle [MM] – *dep for PA*

Apologies:

Paul Ayris [PA]; John Brodholt [JB]; Anthony Finkelstein [AF]; Graham Hunt [GH]; Max Wilkinson [MW]

In attendance:

Corrinne Frazzoni [CF] (Minutes)

Minutes

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes of previous meeting [Chair]

1.1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the group to the meeting and apologies were noted.

1.2. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting and review actions

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 22nd October 2014 were approved. There were no matters arising.

The Action Points from the previous meeting were reviewed and amended as per the attached Action Sheet.

2. LAMIS [GM]

2.1. Update

- Letter sent by Sir John Tooke to Deans of Faculties making LAMIS mandatory for Training and Compliance records by end February 2015.
- Adrian Deeny engaging Heads of Departments
- Current development V4.2 is focused on delivery of functionality to allow full retirement of old ARMIS system. ARMIS retirement planned for Aug/Sept 2015
- Issues with integration with new MyFinance system – some mitigation work underway
- Business Analyst engaged looking at Phase 5 requirements i.e. requirements analysis post V4.2 delivery
- Small works project carrying out Market Review to determine if in-house development remains best value for UCL
 - 8 products identified so far
 - Requirements list to review against in preparation
 - Option assessment will be on approximately 10 year cost projection
 - Presentation of an options analysis – Late February estimated

2.2. Cost Projection

Based on the current estimates and timeline. This includes V4.2 (in development) to allow full retirement of ARMIS. Phase V as scoped and prioritised by project team.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Total costs	493,000	441,000	89,000
Funding available	536,000*	0	0

* 279k from Biological Services, 257k from Research IT Capital Fund

2.3. Options

- Continue through to end of Phase 5
 - Issues with cost and time
- Stop development at end of V4.2
 - ARMIS retirement is complete
 - Issues compliance and project benefits not realised
- Adopt a new commercial product
 - Could be delayed for time after V4.2
 - Dependent on outcome of market review

2.4. Risks/Issues

- Lack of Funding for 15/16
 - No work after 4.2 release means the project fails to deliver:
 - Key compliance needs
 - Actual Severity – Home office requirement and disease prevention
 - Holding full staff training records
 - Full Stock Control
 - Part of 3Rs commitment by UCL
 - Reduction in project costs
 - Productivity gains for staff involved in animal handling
 - Improved accuracy of record keeping
- If decision is taken to adopt a commercial product
 - Procurement will have to be OJEU compliant
 - Installation, integration, project management and data migration costs will be significant addition to any new licence costs
 - Significant adoption risk due to change from ARMIS to LAMIS to procured solution in relatively short timescale

3. Update on HPC 2014/15 and 2015/16 [CG]

3.1. Summary

Significant changes in the profile of UCL's large HPC activities over the next 6-9 months:

- The establishment of a new off-site HPC facility in the Slough data centre and the associated decommissioning of older Legion technology.
- The termination of the Cfl IRIDIS service, and the end of the current EMERALD funding arrangements
- Developments in medical and health informatics see the launch of the MRC funded eMedlab service. Additionally, it is expected that the Farr Institute will start making use of their purchased nodes (within Legion).

3.2. New HPC Project

- Overview

A multi-year project to deliver a major technology refresh and expansion to UCL HPC capability. Consultation with the Research Computing Governance Group (RCGG) and the CRAG determined that the project should focus on:

- Providing a replacement capacity to the Cfl IRIDIS service, which terminates at the end of July
- Replacing ageing Legion hardware with new technology, subject to budget availability

- Status

A Project Board had been convened and the project was currently in start-up. Academic members are Professor Dario Alfe (Dept. of Earth Sciences and Thomas Young Centre), Dr Javier Herrero (Bill Lyons Informatics Centre at UCL Cancer Institute).

- Budget

2014/15 = currently £525k (reduced from £725k). It was requested that the full £1m previously earmarked for 15/16 be maintained to ensure overall loss of capability is minimized.

If project budget is cut further this will result in a significant net reduction in UCL's capacity for medium scale for (64+ core) parallel workloads. It should be noted that there will be a ~ 3-4 month gap between IRIDIS end date as Southampton decommission IRIDIS and start of Slough service.

3.3. Cfl Services

Interest in maintaining large scale Cfl services has waned across partner institutions and at the present time only UCL has budget notionally assigned for 2015/16.

- IRIDIS

Terminates July 2015, time fixed by demolition of accommodating datacentre. There are no Cfl/SES plans to replace the service. This issue is currently being looked at by the CRAG.

- EMERALD

Service is approaching end of life in technology terms, though fully operational, with no fixed plans for termination. Only UCL has committed funding beyond April 2015 (to July 2015). Oxford and Southampton remain interested in further possible investment. Bristol have effectively withdrawn. STFC are keen to continue to provide a large scale 'regional' GPU service and discussions are underway regarding: (a) a costed short term extension of the current Emerald service (b) transition to a new successor service using newer GPU technology and built on a flexible Cloud model into which institutions, industrial partners, and individual PIs could buy. Within UCL, Emerald uptake has reached a plateau at ~12 users/month and the view of most members of the RCGG is that UCL should not invest further at this time. However, it may be asserted that the strategic advantages arising from SES continuing to offer infrastructure based services – albeit at a greatly reduced level – are significant and that UCL should continue to invest here. A recurrent (non-capital) budget of £200k has been established that may be used here.

SES/Cfl infrastructure services are at risk of complete termination from July 2015.

3.4. **Medical and Health Informatics**

- eMedLab

The eMedLab medical informatics Consortium comprises: UCL, QMUL, LSHTM, Crick, Sanger, EBI. The Consortium has won funding from MRC to establish a new data analytics facility, to be hosted in the new Slough datacentre. Total capital and opex budget (3 years only, not including staff costs) is £6.804m. The facility is scheduled to come on line in March 2015 and will provide an entirely new capability for UCL which will underpin successful bids in related strategic areas such as genomics. However considerable challenges arise from the lack of staff budget within the award.

- Farr Institute

The Farr institute invested ~£290k in dedicated Legion nodes in 14/15. To date these have not been used by Farr researchers, though they have been used as part of the general Legion pool. Dedicated training for prospective Farr users is being planned for later this term and Farr London is reaching out to other potential users from across the Consortium.

The need to balance staff resource across an increased number of HPC facilities and users communities presents a key challenge for 15/16. There is a duty to sustain these communities and provide continuity of service.

4. **Student Research IT - proposed initiative [CG]**

UCL 2034 sets out a clear strategy for education at UCL, with the aspiration to be a global leader in the integration of research and education, underpinning an inspirational student experience whereby students will participate in the research process and the creation of knowledge, supported by UCL's academic and research staff. The emerging Connected Curriculum will provide a framework in which students will undertake a programme involving engagement with other students, staff and the outside world, focused on active research.

Traditionally, ISD has delivered services for researchers via the Research IT Services (RITS) Group and services for taught courses via the E-Learning Environments (ELE) Group. The new strategy means that these groups are likely to need closer working arrangements in the future and services may need to expand to include provision for taught students. Both groups have already met and identified significant common ground.

Proposed three-stage process to help position ISD in readiness to supply service:

- Stage 1: What do we currently have?
 - Identify services currently available to staff and postgraduate researchers, and whether these are also available to taught students.
 - Create an "IT for students as researchers" web page which catalogues the services that are currently available to taught students.
 - Identify gaps in provision.
- Stage 2: Identify quick wins projects to enhance services
 - Implement quick wins and simple service changes where these can reasonably build on existing capacity.
 - Examples might include converting an existing training course to online format for scalability or rolling out software items that are used as part of the research process (e.g. for undertaking surveys/questionnaires or performing data visualisation) where licences are already in place or can be obtained reasonably cheaply.
- Stage 3: Develop the IT environment
 - Invest in additional infrastructure, licenses or environments to support the IT needs for students as researchers. These might be in such areas as data collection and analysis, high performance computing, ethics, research software developing, information security. This is primarily aimed at those who use significant IT resources within their research activity.

- Invest in platform(s) to support the Connected Curriculum, allowing students to engage with each other, with staff, with research and with the outside world, supporting interdisciplinary work and network building and branding. This will be aimed at all taught students through their 'connected' courses. This will begin with a bid for Domain of One's Own in the 15/16 funding round.
- Next steps:
 - Submit a minor works proposal for funding to employ one or more research students to undertake stage 1, identifying desired and available ISD services and build descriptions and links about these into a form publishable to the student community.
 - Develop a full proposal for consideration in the 2015/16 funding round to take forward stages 2 and 3.

The expectation is that LTISG will govern this work, as it focuses mostly on the teaching environment. However it may be appropriate to invite a member of RITS to sit on LTISG to build collaboration.

Action: Add to standing agenda [CG]

5. Reports from the Chairs

Brief highlights of current work:

- 5.1. Research Computing Governance Group (RCGG)
 - Need for SLMS representation on RCGG
 - Recruitment for Research Computing Team Leader post (formerly Bruno Silva) still ongoing; re-advertisement pending
 - Cfl future plans and service strategy/major refresh of UCL HPC (covered in item 3 above)

- 5.2. Research Data Services Executive (RDSE)
 - RDSE membership now refreshed and with a greatly increased number of academics
 - The latest RDSE meeting had highlighted a number of priorities:
 - Funding availability
 - Strategic priorities, particularly in keeping with UCL 2034
 - Academic requirements and buy-in
 - Development of current services offered by UCL Research Data Service
 - Pending recruitment of Advocacy Officer for research data management, to be based in UCL Library Services
 - New 1-year programme for Library staff to help develop a support layer for UCL academics akin to role played by UCL Open Access team.
 - Immediate priorities include:
 - Detailed analysis of funder requirements following EPSRC research data policy framework, compliance date 1 May 2015
 - Review of current UCL arrangements for research data management, including the UCL research data policy and supporting documents, to ensure UCL is one of the leaders within the League of European Research Universities (LERU) in implementing the LERU Roadmap for research data
 - Advocacy to UCL academic departments to increase number of datasets and participating researchers using the UCL Research Data Service
 - Successful implementation of a research data archiving service in UCL, to complement the existing storage service
 - Max Wilkinson would be leaving UCL at end of March; the Chair of RDSE wished to record UCL's thanks for his work in establishing UCL's activity in UCL research data management and for his advocacy that UCL should take a lead in this field.

- 5.3. Research IT Applications Governance Group (RAGG)
 - Good feedback on research portfolio
 - eLabNotebook
 - Proposal to initiate a small works project to discuss a site-wide licence arrangement with Labguru and work with other departments to demonstrate its use within Institute of Neurology and encourage users

- PAGES (Pre-Award Grant System) - formerly RIM
 - In evaluation phase
 - 3 vendor Engagement and Scenario Days held
 - Site visits underway (2 of 3 completed)
- IRIS
 - Project officially closed at November Project Board. Proposal for ongoing governance of Research Profiles (IRIS) and Research Publications (RPS & UCL/Discovery) to be taken up by UCL Publications Board
- LAMIS
 - Phase IV on schedule.
 - Platform upgrade (Oracle ADF) now scheduled
 - Phase V scoping exercise completed
 - Engagement activities underway – target end of Feb for compliance

Action: SK to email DP to look at utilising PAGES and gathering input from Vice Deans

- 5.4. Research Software Development Governance Group (RSDGG)
- Capital project funding for Research Software Dashboard project
 - Issues with recruiting the right staff for research software engineer roles, partly due to the competitiveness of commercial salaries but also in terms of career path offered to research software developers.
 - Challenge in absorbing grant income
 - SDRAG made good progress with training and outreach plans

6. 2014/15 and 2015/16 Project Portfolio [GM]

7. RITS departmental organization changes and growth [GM]

8. RITS Service Report [GM]

9. AOB

On behalf of the Research IT Executive, the Chair offered thanks to Gavin McLachlan for his work within ISD and for the RIISG, and wished him well in his future role as CIO at the University of Edinburgh.

10. Next meeting

The next RITE meeting will be held on Monday 18th May 2015 from 2pm-4pm.

List of Current Actions

Closed (shaded) actions will be deleted after one meeting.

No	Meeting Date	Minute item	Owner	Action	Status	Notes
4.	9.1.14	2.1	GM	SLMS Facilitation & Communication: Draft facilitation & communications document for SLMS Faculty Deans	CLOSED	Need to consider e-health plans 21/05/14 DP has written to John Tooke. At least one Dean is needed per faculty. 19/01/15 - Item closed by Chair
5.	9.1.14	2.1	DP/JS	Joint academic & e-infrastructure Partnership and Collaborations: Further meeting with MC to deal with the FARR/CHAPTER spend.	CLOSED	31.3.14 Update: GM preparing doc for MRC. ISD plan to hire PM for this but no money so letter to be sent to MRC. DP to meet with GM, David Lomas, Mike Cope & Sammy Massiah to discuss structure of grant. 19/01/15 - Item closed by Chair
8.	9.1.14	4.1	GM/C G	Chair rotation of Working Groups: A timetable to be proposed with 3 year cycle.	CLOSED	Add timetable to TORs 19/01/15 - CG to do. Item closed by Chair
11.	21.05.14	3	GM PA	Research IT draft proposed programme of work for FY 2014/15 <u>LAMIS:</u> RITE to request an additional contribution of £100k from Biological Services <u>UCL Research Data Management Coordinator:</u> Chair asked PA to prepare paper outlining vision and continuity of services	CLOSED	19/01/15 - Item closed by Chair
13.	21.05.14	5	CG	RCGG membership: CG to consider the development of an RC 'roadmap'	CLOSED	Concern had been expressed about depletion of interest among RCGG members. Suitable SLMS members needed to reinforce the membership and engage medics in discussions re HPC and new money. 19/01/15 - Item closed by Chair
14.	22.10.14	4	CG	Next Legion phase and on-costs of offsite datacenter: look at clarifying process and constructing business case	CLOSED	19/01/15 - Item closed by Chair
15.	22.10.14	5	GM	The Executive agreed to suggest additional budget for LAMIS at next RIISG.	CLOSED	19/01/15 - Item closed by Chair
16.	19.01.15	4	CG	Student Research IT - proposed initiative – add to standing agenda	NEW	
17.	19.01.15	5.3	SK	Email DP to look at utilising PAGS and gathering input from Vice Deans	NEW	