

## RESEARCH INFORMATION & IT SERVICES GOVERNANCE GROUP

### MINUTES

**Date:** Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2012  
**Time:** 2.30pm – 4pm  
**Venue:** 2 Taviton St, Ground Floor Meeting Room

**Present (13):** Paul Ayris (**PA**), David Price (**DP**) – Chair, John Brodholt (**JB**), Jon Butterworth (**JBu**), Richard Catlow (**RC**), Andrew Clark (**AC**), Peter Coveney (**PC**), Clare Gryce (**CG**), Graham Hunt (**GH**), Gavin Mclachlan (**GM**), Angelos Michaelides (**AM**), Max Wilkinson (**MW**), Marek Zeibart (**MZ**)

**Deputies:** None

**Secretary:** Rabina Choudhry

**Apologies:** David Balding, Jacky Pallas, Claire Warwick, Mark Lythgoe,

### Matters Discussed

#### 1.1 Welcome and apologies

1.1.1 The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting.

1.1.2 Apologies were noted.

#### 1.2 Approval of Minutes

1.2.1 Minutes of the last meeting were approved by the Board.

#### 1.3 New Members

1.3.1 GM informed everyone that Professor David Balding; Institute of Genetics had accepted the invitation to become a member of the RSIIG.

## **1.4 Current RSIG and Research IT governance structure and update on the Working Groups (GM)**

1.4.1 An RSIG Governance structure and associated Working Groups document had been circulated to members prior to the meeting for review and comments.

**Action GM:** - to provide details of comments and to whom they should be addressed to. An updated copy of the Working group governance structure and membership will be circulated to the RIISG for comments.

1.4.2 It was suggested that the RSIG Chair would regularly review the working group structure in order to ensure appropriate and adequate coverage of all areas. **AGREED**

1.4.3 The general scope of the Research Management Applications Group (WG3) and the Researcher Applications Working Group (WG4) was discussed.

1.4.4 It was highlighted that a replacement was required for Professor Andrew Clarke for the Research Management Applications Group (WG3).

**Action GH:** - to seek replacement.

## **1.5 Research Computing Working Group updates (CG)**

1.5.1 CG reported that two possible project programme proposals for the expansion of UCL's central HPC services had been discussed.

1.5.2 The Working Group recommended an approach that would maintain an on-site HPC while establishing an off-site HPC. **AGREED**

1.5.3 CG and GM reported on the recent EPSRC capital grant award of £2.8m to establish a shared regional HPC facility, named the "e-Infrastructure South Consortium" which would incorporate the following Universities:

- UCL
- Oxford
- Southampton
- Bristol

1.5.4 JBu enquired as to whether by retaining an on-site HPC facility, and also by not establishing an off-site facility until 2013, there would as a result be considerable continued constraints on the extent to which 'on-site' datacentre space and infrastructure could be used to for departmental purposes. The group noted that in determining the costs of departmental HPC 'hidden' costs such as staff costs and datacentre space utilised be taken into account. It was recommended that departmental and central HPC strategies (and associated dependencies) need to be considered together. Further, it was noted that ideally access to all UCL HPC resources should be provided in a way that it transparent to the user. CG noted that it would be possible to use 'Grid' middleware or some other unified interface to enable this, though explained that the implementation and maintenance costs for such a solution may be high and would need to be carefully considered.

1.5.5 JB enquired as to the subsequent year-on-year costs of maintaining the new e-infrastructure South Consortium HPC clusters. GM informed all that the EPSRC grant would cover the cost of initial purchase and the first year of operation.

**Action GM:** - To report to the board subsequent costs in maintaining the new e-infrastructure South Consortium HPC clusters.

1.5.6 GM highlighted that both Southampton and Rutherford Appleton Laboratory had the expansion space to grow their individual clusters.

1.5.7 It was decided that further discussion would be required regarding the aims and objectives of UCL's HPC platform strategy with the emphasis on strategic capability and platform capability within the context of the REF. Impact statements and the bearing on industry needed to be considered.

1.5.8. MZ noted that consideration should also be given to the use of Cloud-based solutions CG agreed that this was something that would need to be considered as part of future strategy, though noted that Cloud technology for HPC was still maturing and was not currently suitable for parallel workloads. **AGREED**

1.5.9. JB challenged the value of having a UCL only offsite facility, when we have already been awarded an offsite facility in the EPSRC HPC grant that will be run by the e-infrastructure South Consortium. Can we consider this offsite facility to be the focus? It was agreed that this aspect of the strategy needed further discussion.

**Action All** – Discuss HPC strategy for 2012/2013, at next meeting.

1.5.7 Further agenda items to be discussed for future RSIG meetings:

- UCL Datacentre strategy
- UCL Research Network strategy
- Long term HPC strategy

## **1.6 Results from Research Computing User Satisfaction survey (CG)**

1.6.1 CG reported on the Legion user satisfaction survey conducted Autumn Term 2011, noting that a written summary report is being prepared.

**Action CG:** To write report and distribute to the Research Computing Working Group, CRAG and make report available to others upon request.

## **1.7 Update on Research Data (MW)**

1.7.1 DP emphasised the necessity to investigate long term sustainability of the new UCL Research Data System, specifically the details of a long term business case in order for UCL Senior Management Team to provide additional allocation. DP also highlighted that institutionally UCL had not been required to fund a central data repository and hence the following was necessary:

- know the scope of the user community
- understand the reason for storage requirement

GM informed all, that the IT budget was insufficient to scale a system beyond 10-20petabytes and revenue opportunities should be investigated.

1.7.2 PC indicated that E-Health Informatics Research Centres (E-HIRCs) Call requires UCL and its partners to have in place an integrated data storage solution. AC enquired as to whether a shared research data system had been discussed on an inter-university level.

**Action: MW** – to investigate E-Health engagement and shared research data system.

## **1.8 Research Accelerator**

1.8.1 Research Accelerator would be renewed for this year based on the following:

- Re-launch using case examples of successes
- Integration with IRIS to prevent un-necessary duplication of input
- Set a key performance indicator of more than 150 users by end of 2012 as minimum criteria for continued funding for 2013. **AGREED IN PRINCIPLE**

1.8.2 MZ highlighted the need for a strong communications program to promote Research Accelerator as the Faculty of Engineering is unaware of this facility.

**Action: GH** – Liaise with Kate Oliver, Communications, Marketing and Events Manager for Faculty of Engineering to discuss Research Accelerator promotion strategy.

## 1.9 Research Publications Service – non-engagers (GH)

1.9.1 GH informed all that non-engager reports could be produced by department as well as RPS which include H indexes. From 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012, a reporting module would be implemented within RPS to allow for easier reporting.

## 2. Action Points

No	Date	Minute	Owner	Action	Status	Notes
1	16.11	1.3.1		Review Membership	OPEN	
2	24.1	1.4.1	GM	Provide details of Working Group leads and contact details, for comments from Group members.		
3	24.1	1.4.4	G.H	<b>WG3</b> - Seek replacement for Andrew Clarke		
4	24.1	1.5.5	G.M	<b>E-infrastructure South Consortium</b> – Report on subsequent maintenance cost.		
5	24.1	1.5.6	All	Discuss HPC strategy for 2012/2013		
6	24.1	1.6.1	C.G	<b>Research Computing User survey</b> – Write report & distribute		
7	24.1	1.7.2	M.W	<b>Research Data Update</b> – Investigate E-Health engagement & shared research data system		
8	24.1	1.8.2	G.H	<b>Research Accelerator</b> – Liaise with Kate Oliver Engineering Faculty re promotion strategy		
9	24.1	1.5.7	GM	<b>Research Network</b> – Gavin McLachlan to deliver a report on the current and future planning Research Network and Research Network Strategy.		
10	24.1	1.5.7	GM	<b>Datacentre</b> – Gavin McLachlan to provide an update on the UCL ISD datacentre strategy for Research IT for review by the RIISG.		
11	24.1	1.5.7	CG	<b>Long term RC Strategy and roadmap</b> – Clare Gryce to provide and updated and long term Research Computing strategy and roadmap for consideration.		

## 3. Next Meeting

3.1. 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012, 2pm to 3.30pm, 2 Taviton St, Ground Floor Meeting Room