



RESEARCH IT EXECUTIVE (RITE)

Minutes

Wednesday 21 May, 11.30am-1.30pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room, 2 Taviton Street

Chair:

David Price [DP]

Present:

Paul Ayris [PA]; John Brodholt [JB]; Andrew Clark [AC]; Clare Gryce [CG]; Graham Hunt [GH]; Gavin McLachlan [GM]; Max Wilkinson [MW]

Apologies:

Anthony Finkelstein [AF]; Sinead Kennedy [SK]

In attendance:

Corrinne Frazzoni [CF] (Minutes)

Minutes

1. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising [Chair]

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 31st March 2014 were approved.
The Action Points from the previous meeting were reviewed and amended as per the attached Action Sheet.

2. Financial budget review

GM presented the Research IT Capital Funding profile for review:

	2013/14	2014/15
Research Computing	£494k	£525k
Research Applications	£735k	£1,219k
Research Data	£359k	£799k
Research Software Development & Minor works	£148k	£150k
Total RIISG UCL funds	£1,736k	£2,693k
External and Dept. funded	£2,569k	£2,266k
	(£300k HPC £978k Data £442k DC £849k Apps+network)	(£646k HPC £866k Data £586k DC £166k Networking)
Grand Total Funds spent	£4,305k	£4,959k

3. Research IT draft proposed programme of work for FY 2014/15

GM presented the list of proposed capital bids to the RITE, requesting a final decision on priorities. The Executive agreed to prioritize bids as follows, noting the impact if not funded: Note that the Priority 1 items listed below will get funded for FY 2014/15 out of the capital project fund for RIISG.

- **Minor Works fund**

Risk if project is not done:

- No R&D programme.
- Unable to respond to emergency projects.
- No agility in funding.

Agreed: Priority 1 £150k

- **IRIS Enhancements (Phase VI)**

Risk if project is not done:

- Only small enhancements for FY 2014/15.
- Reduction in engagement – impact on institutional reputation

Agreed: Priority 1 £30k Priority 2 £107k

- **LAMIS**

Risk if project is not done:

- Cannot successfully respond to legislative needs.
- Cannot provide evidence of management to Home Office requirements.
- Unequal and incomplete rollout and adoption.

£200k will be contributed by Biological services.

Agreed: Priority 1 £257k Priority 2 £100k

ACTION: RITE to ask Biological services for an additional £100k

- **Research Information System (RIM)**

Risk if project is not done:

- Any delay to the replacement of pFACT would be an unacceptable risk to UCL.
 - Postpones RIM implementation which will begin to impact on REF2020 processes etc
- Actions:
- Priority for RIM will be strictly the Pre-award and costing modules for FY 2014/15

Agreed: Priority 1 £757k

- **Research Equipment Catalogue**

Risk if project is not done:

- Lack of integration with UCL systems
- Degradation of quality of data within system over time
- No booking system to allow easier booking of equipment for use

Agreed: Priority 2 £55k

- **Open Access Support**

Risk if project is not done:

- Need to react to HEFCE requirements for REF2020.
- May impact long term REF2020
- Move of infrastructure to more supportable versions including EPRINTS upgrade

Agreed: Priority 1 £34k

- **Research Impact Curation Support**

Risk if project is not done:

- Lack of easily searchable solution.
- Lack of integration with IRIS etc.for visualisation outside of UCL
- May impact long term REF2020 success.
- First and foremost, the RIC team's posts are currently only funded to July 2015; as such, it's imperative to maximise, as soon as possible, the progress we make with developing and populating a database to the point where it can be useful to and continued by colleagues in other departments.
- The two biggest challenges in developing impact-related components of UCL's REF2014 submission were poor staff engagement and a frequent lack, in the absence of a systematic method of or resource for collating and storing it, of evidence to support impact claims.
- Delaying the development of the RIC database would mean failing to capitalise on momentum built up during REF2014 preparations to redress these issues, entrenching disengagement with impact across the College. This is at odds with UCL's emphasis on the importance of research impact and on facilitating more timely and efficient preparations for REF2020 - which will determine mainstream 'quality-related' research income (currently £71m annually or c.15% of research income).
- In addition, one of the outcomes of this project is to support major, complex bid submissions by providing evidence of research impact and collaboration e.g. NIHR Comprehensive biomedical research centres which provide £160m of funding and are due for submission end 2015. A delay in the Impact curation database would not enable us to support this and other similar major bids.
- A delay would also affect the timeline for integration of the impact case studies with IRIS which is currently scoped within Phase 6, and also subsequently with RIM.

Agreed: Priority 1 £37k

- **Research Professional Integration**

Risk if project is not done:

- Lack of integration with UCL systems

Agreed: Priority 3 £26k

- **Research Staff Log**

Risk if project is not done:

- Unable to improve post Doc management of projects and reporting to research councils etc.

Agreed: Priority 3 £34k

- **Centrally provided iPython notebook service**

Risk if project is not done:

- The existing iPython notebook code currently being provided by ISD ELE, and used by the Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, will not be updated.
- The existing service will not be expanded to deliver additional services to support researchers and students in other disciplines in learning new numerical and computational methods, and conducting exploratory software development and data analysis, will not be delivered.

Agreed: Priority 3 £16k

- **Major UCL HPC Refresh and Expansion**

Risk if project is not done:

- As the number of service users continues to rise, researchers will experience increasing wait times for jobs to be run – in this important respect service levels will fall.
- Additionally, there will be no replacement for the compute capacity that will be lost when the Cfl Iridis service is terminated in summer 2015.
- Very old technology will not get replaced and an increasing number of user codes will be hard or impossible to compile to run on this platform.
- Increasing amounts of staff time will be spent assisting users in helping them run code on legacy hardware, and managing equipment that is more prone to failures.

Agreed: Priority 1 £525k Priority 2 £200k

- **Unix-like Desktop Computing Environment**

Risk if project is not done:

- UCL will remain without a central Linux and Unix-based desktop such as is available in other leading UK Universities institutions (e.g. Cambridge, Imperial, Edinburgh)
- It will remain challenging for the large number of UCL Departments that rely heavily on the use of Linux and other Unix-like desktop environments for research and teaching to use many central and local services in an efficient and coordinated way.

Agreed: Priority 3, £19k

- **Data Safe Haven (IDHS) Phase 4**

Risk if project is not done:

- Key project to expand Data safe haven beyond storage. Critical to maintain UCL's grant and security obligations.
- Key to UCL maintaining its dominance in the safekeeping and use of sensitive data.

Agreed: Priority 1 £300k Priority 2 £281k

- **Distributed Data resilience infrastructure**

Risk if project is not done:

- Users are unable to bridge the proximity change that is required to take advantage of centralised services: users prefer to have local control over data storage for performance and security.
- Data safety not provided as value added incentive.

Agreed: Priority 3 £64k

- **UCL Research Data Archive Pilot**

Risk if project is not done:

- There will be no egress of research data into a preservation environment thus not making efficient use of expensive core infrastructure.
- Service risks reaching capacity and turning users away. ISD reputation damage.

Agreed: Priority 1 £231k

- **UCL Research Data Management Coordinator**

Risk if project is not done:

- Uptake of services will be delayed and miss critical objective of communication.
- Expectations will be unmet for the third time and ISD reputation further damaged.
- Unable to spread best practice in RDM. Key to training new and existing staff.

Agreed: Priority 1 £132k

ACTION: Chair requested PA to prepare paper outlining vision and continuity

- **RITS Authentication Pathfinder**

- Unable to easily offer RITS systems to external collaborators and consortium members. (eMedlab, Farr, SES)

Agreed: Priority 1 £136k

- **Research Software Dashboard**

Risk if project is not done:

- Existing services that support best practise research software development will not be integrated; PIs and group leaders will continue to have to refer to several tools to manage, and get reports on, their research software outputs.
- Additionally, UCL will not be able to readily generate summary information about its research software development activity, and will lose a unique opportunity to further establish itself as a thought leader in this growing area.

Agreed: Priority 1 £99k

Total budget (cash)	£2,376k	£2,376k
Variance	-£1,413k	-£312k
Total budget with 13% overbooking allowance	£2,685k	£2,685k
Variance	-£1,104k	-£3k

4. **Datacentre update and governance**

GM presented an update on the Data Centre strategy and governance.

A Data Centre Working Group had been convened.

Members:

- GM (Executive)
- CG (Research Computing)
- D Timm (CS)
- T Crummy (EE)
- Ben Waugh (Physics)
- J Saßmannshausen (Chemistry)
- Rick Passey (SLMS)
- Andrew Dawson
- Simon Marham
- Patrick Malcolm

Offsite Datacentre preferred supplier and location now confirmed as Infinity in Slough.

- Excellent rates – with further aggregated discounts applied to all the participating HEIs, trusts and research institutes
- Standstill period ends in 10 days
- Operational Sept 2014
- Highly scalable (22,000 SQ meters, 34 MW power)
- JANET brokered and shared with Kings, QMUL, LSE, Crick, Sanger, EBI (already interest from numerous trusts, CRI, and others)
- Second location at Stratford

Action: JB agreed to represent the group at the new Data Centre Working Group.

5. **Update from the Research IT domain chairs**

Concern 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.

Action: CG to consider the development of an RC 'roadmap'.

6. AOB

There was no other business.

7. Next meeting

The next RITE meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd October from 1.30pm-3.30pm.

List of Current Actions

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

No	Meeting Date	Minute item	Owner	Action	Status	Notes
1.	9.1.14	2.1	Group Heads	Budgets (Capitalisation): Individual groups to decide on 2014/15 purchases, 5 year strategies & spend plans.	Closed	Research domain groups to plan the spend at the next RITE 21/05/14 CLOSED
2.	9.1.14	2.1	JS/AC	Research Applications Group (RAG – WG Group #3 &4): Seek further Academic and Faculty membership	On hold	Go back to original plan.
3.	9.1.14	2.1	WG#1 & WG#2	HPC/Datacentre HPC Communications Group to be set up and formally report to Governance Group.	Ongoing	21/05/14 JB agreed to represent RITE at HPC Communications Group
4.	9.1.14	2.1	GM	SLMS Facilitation & Communication: Draft facilitation & communications document for SLMS Faculty Deans	Ongoing	Need to consider e-health plans 21/05/14 DP has written to John Tooke. At least one Dean is needed per faculty
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.	Ongoing	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.
8.	9.1.14	4.1	GM/CG	Chair rotation of Working Groups: A timetable to be proposed with 3 year cycle.	Ongoing	Add timetable to TORs
10.	9.1.14	6.2	CG MW GM GM	RITS statistics and measurements: <u>Research Computing:</u> Data to be simplified, metrics refined and made more consistent. <u>Research Data:</u> A breakdown to be provided across Faculties showing justification of usage <u>Incidents:</u> Data definition to be clearer and more defined. <u>Research Applications:</u> A list to be provided of all non engagers in RPS/IRIS Faculty Engagement	Closed	Include all 8 areas and add training reports 21/05/14 Closed

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	New action	
12.	21.05.14	4	JB	Datacentre governance : JB agreed to represent the group at the new Data Centre Working Group	New action	
13.	21.05.14	5	CG	RCGG membership : CG to consider the development of an RC 'roadmap'	New action	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.