

RESEARCH SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT GOVERNANCE GROUP

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Thursday 5th December 2013

Time: 11.00am – 12.00pm

Venue: Room 103, Podium Building, 1 Eversholt Street, London NW1 2DN.

Present (7): Chair: Anthony Finkelstein **(AF)**,
Simon Arridge **(SA)**, Erik Burman **(EB)**, Clare Gryce **(CG)**,
James Hetherington **(JH)**, Andrew Smith **(AS)**, John Shawe-Taylor **(JT)**

Apologies: Peter Coveney, Richard Catlow **(RC)**

1. Approval of Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were approved.

2. Report from RSD Resource Allocation Group (RSDRAG)

(AS) reported on the progress from the RSDRAG. There is now money from confirmed and pending/unconfirmed grant income and for a new hire of 24 months, which has been approved by UCL Finance. An advert will be going out with interview in January. Due to this number of funded projects fewer resources will be available for free calls. A call for one new project will go out. Overall allocation of the time of the RSD team is at approx. 120 %.

(JH) highlighted the need to balance between free and paid projects in terms of securing funding vs. promoting the research software development initiative.

3. Report on Seminar Series

(EB) reported on the seminar series. An advert has been circulated for an admin job to assist in planning and coordinating the running of the series. A good candidate has been found and an interview will be held shortly. The admin job is at 2.5 % FTE.

(CG) asked about the scope of the series. It was agreed that there was no need to precisely define the scope at the moment. **(SA)** Suggested that members of the group

should bring in recommended candidate speaker. (AF) suggested sending out a mail to a large list and asking for good candidates. A good first task for the new admin person would be to draft such a mail. It is expected that the person starts at the beginning of the New Year, while the series starts in the middle of the term.

Room booking was discussed. AF suggested using the UCL conference centre as an alternative if no rooms could be found. Renting of rooms in the conference centre will be charged and paid for using the joint funding provided for the series by MAPS and Engineering.

(JT) talked about a doing Master classes as a weeklong series of talks on the order of 3 talks, and that perhaps some of these talks could be by people from industry. The master class series allows for a combination of introductory tutorials and more advanced talks.

(AF) Highlighted the importance of making the seminars more broadly available. It would be good if talks contained a tutorial at the beginning of the talks and were advertised as such to allow non-experts to participate. (SA) mentioned that this is similar to the master class series (tutorial lecture and advanced material) but within one lecture.

It was agreed that it would be good to lecture cast the talks.

4. Training and teaching

a) Update on current and evolving Research Computing training programme

(JH) gave feedback from the C++ course. There was good evaluation from the feedback form. There was some dropout during the course mainly because they did not meet the prerequisites of knowing at least one other programming language. This will be borne in mind when planning the next instance of the course.

The students liked the material and the Github based test driven development. It is expected to change the course to use C++11 next time. Managing prerequisites is challenging. It is important to direct people to the right training. At the moment this is Software Carpentry for the basis learning and C++ as the more advanced. (JH) is currently working on developing a Software Engineering for Researchers training for pilot in the spring term.

There was an extended discussion regarding involvement in UCL's CDT's. It was noted that two of the seven funded UCL CDTs mentioned Software Carpentry in their proposals. (JH) highlighted the need to coordinate the training in software development around college. There was some discussion around how to follow up with successful proposals.

CG mentioned that a lot of the funded projects were using existing external training (NAG, SSI). This makes it difficult to establish new local training.

b) Further discussion on Taught Masters for Research Software Engineering/Computational Science

(AF) thought that UCL should have a Software Engineering for Science master's program. There was a discussion around different tracks, MRES, MSC and integration with CDT and RA roles, possibly as a fixed first term with choice afterwards. (SA) highlighted the need to avoid confusions over different programs.

(JH) reported that he has spoken to people from EPCC. They said that the master program was strategically important to build the centre and for requirements.

(JH) highlighted the need for Credentials of some form for Research Software Engineers while (AF) noted that there might be a possible market for UCL in the ownership and award of these credentials.

(AF) suggested that a Brain storming group be created to explore further. New action on (JT) to set up a brainstorming group. (AF) to brief (RC). (JH) noted that Research IT Services (RITS) would be happy to be actively involved.

It was noted that it may be possible to run some modules in 2014/15 where these have already been delivered as part of the RITS and RSD training courses (C++ etc.).

5. Update on status of current agreed Actions (below)

6. Date and agenda for next meeting

Actions

Shaded actions will be deleted after next meeting

No	Date	Minute	Owner	Action	Status	Notes
1	25.9.13	1.3.2	JH, AS	First year's activity Report – Design of report be worked up for distribution to a wider audience.	Ongoing	CG is speaking with ISD Illustration about design
2	25.9.13	1.3.4	CG, JH	EPSRC document – write 2 page document highlighting future work, collaborative engagement, strategies for scaling etc.	Ongoing	Pending. JH conversations with US funding bodies at Super Computing. Large difference between National labs and universities.
3	25.9.13	1.4.3	CG	Software Development Infrastructure Bid – Investigate and report on other funding models, include impact of reallocation change on other areas.	Closed - Superseded	Funding to hire comes from development grants, no re-allocation necessary.
4	25.9.13	1.5.1	JH	Academic seminar series – costing for external seminars and employment of PhD student to RC and AF.	Closed - done	
5	4.12.13	4(b)	JT	Brainstorming group for Masters program – Set up a group to brainstorm on and discuss the new Masters program.	New	