

Graduate Students' Forum

Minutes: 11 March 2013

Attending: SB Simon Baker (MPhil)
SMB Sandro Bauer (NLIP)
LG Lise Gough
MG Matthew Grosvenor (SRG)
VI Vaiva Imbrasaite (Rainbow)
AK Andreas Koltes (CompArch)
RK Ramana Kumar (PLS) [Secretary]
AR Andy Rice (GEC) [Chair]
DT Daniel Thomas (DTG)
IT Ivo Timoteo (AI&B)
KS Kumar Sharad (Security)

1. Apologies

Jon Crowcroft (JC).

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

i. Kitchen utensils.

MG prepared a report (available separately). Summary: Much is missing. The Rainbow group has a potential solution for at least tracking where cutlery ends up: use distinctively designed utensils. AR will allocate some GSF money to be spent on replenishment sets, at a budget of less than £30 per group.

Action: All to bring a sample of their group's cutlery design to the next meeting.

ii. SoT Research Survey.

MG's analysis is that the survey had potential for start date bias unless the statistics were done after grouping responses by start date.

iii. Website updates.

DT has sent an email to the GSF pointing out changes that have been made to the website. At this point, no more are necessary.

iv. Unofficial PhD Guide.

DT says it is fairly sensible, however the names of people in it need to be updated and there are some typographical errors and out of date URLs. To make changes will require the document's source code.

Action: AR to pursue the document source code.

Action: DT to provide the source code to the GSF.

KS observed that the sections about PhD proposals, vivas, and 2nd year reports is out of date.

Action: SMB to update the section about proposals.

Action: MG to update the sections about 2nd year reports and vivas.

Action: VI to update the section about internships, possibly using guidance published by Neil Dodgson.

v. System Administrator Issues Document.

DT has summarised the issues in the document available separately. We discussed remote compute jobs, storage, filer's hourly delays, and networking. AK brings forward comments from Simon Moore, including that the network speed issue is likely to be resolved within a year by spending more money on it.

Secondly, do we want laptops for new PhD students instead of desktops? KS points out that desktops are more upgradeable. AR suggests that we ensure that we can provide sufficient server computing power and availability before considering switching to laptops.

AK also brings feedback from CompArch postdocs: there have been cases of equipment being semi-repaired and returned back and forth several times, and of known faulty equipment being passed on to others. It would be better for replacements to be given and proper repairs done separately. This has been incorporated into the document.

Can more local storage be made available in each group?

SMB mentions that Kerberos tickets are unwieldy to use and can appear to expire randomly.

MG says that people are doing unsafe things to get around things not working, and this is a brewing problem.

Action: DT to update the document, AR to sanitise it and take it to the GEC.

vi. Pot luck lunch.

While there are no volunteers to run it, there will be no lunch.

vii. GEC items.

a. Café. AR mentioned this issue at the GEC and it was noted.

b. Windows. AR mentioned this issue at the GEC and it was noted. AK says building services (possibly with Nottingham researchers) are trialling a temperature data collection thing. VI says the problem is not enough warmth, and space heaters are very difficult to obtain from building services. AR advised people to talk to their supervisor and then (if necessary) to Margaret Levitt to obtain heaters.

4. Departmental announcements

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) is now underway. LG encourages all to complete it (and to encourage your group to do so).

The results of the PTES (Taught) were spectacular, both for turnout and for happy responses.

5. Staff Student Consultative Forum

Filer issue was noted at the forum.

Structure of IA course is up for review. All to contact DT with their input. DT to make another request for this feedback.

Supervisor feedback forms for Part II are now in place.

6. Research Development

Last year's bids: foreign language training, Microsoft Research Summer School, voice projection training, GSF discretionary fund.

Next year's proposal: same things, plus postgraduate lecture series. Discussed how to increase attendance of such lectures: cake/food, good scheduling, mentors.

How well are 1st year students fitting in and engaging in the department? Lunches? AR: there's no money for unstructured activity. So, lunches with presentations, e.g. weekly PhD lunches. MG suggests a "3 minute thesis project" activity idea.

Action: AR to spend money for next term on 3 minute thesis project.

Activity Evaluation: this year evaluating foreign language training via a questionnaire.

UKBA Feedback: VI mentioned one student delayed by a week.

Action: VI to email LG with details.

KS says the university should make UKBA details clearer. LG says they are going to.

7. Student feedback

(a) DTG (DT)

Nothing to report.

(b) CompArch (AK)

Nothing to report.

(c) PLS (RK)

Nothing to report.

(d) MPhil (SB)

Nothing to report (students are busy).

(e) NLIP (SMB)

Nothing to report.

(f) AI & Bioinformatics (IT)

Nothing to report.

(g) Rainbow (VI)

Nothing to report.

(h) Security (KS)

Nothing to report.

(i) SRG (MG)

The SRG ran a training activity, rejigging the server room.

All approved spending GSF money to reimburse Malta who ran this.

AR suggests to advertise this activity more widely than SRG next year.

DT suggests that other kinds of training on infrastructure could be useful activities. "Technology workshops". AR says they can be publicised on talks.cam.

8. Any other business

MG will be away next term, so a new SRG representative is needed.

Action: MG to find his substitute.

LG needs volunteers to speak to new PhD students. RK volunteered. AR to help.

9. Date of next meeting

Early next term. Poll: <https://dudle.inf.tu-dresden.de/gsf/>.