

DRAFT

IT Strategy Committee (ITSC)
22nd May 2023 at 2 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Present:

Professor Simon Moore (SM) – Chair
Dr Stewart Carswell (SC)
Jo de Bono (JD) - Secretary
Dr Rafal Mantiuk (RM)

Daniel Porter (DP)
Dr Thomas Sauerwald (TS)
Malcolm Scott (MS)
Professor Andreas Vlachos (AV)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Professor Mateja Jamnik, Dr Abraham Martin (UIS) and Dr Thomas Sauerwald.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2023 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Actions from the Previous Meeting

(a) *GPU Resources for Teaching (Item 4a)*

MS reported that the department cannot provide in-house GPUs due to space restrictions. It might be useful however to have a limited pool. Cloud GPUs are expensive. HPC is good.

The recommendation is to provide some in-house GPU cluster and some budget for HPC hours (~1000hrs).

ACTION: MS to discuss with whoever is responsible for the ACS budget about how to spend it.

ACTION: MS to look into HPC tools for monitoring usage.

(b) *GDPR (Item 4b)*

SM proposed that the department direct people towards central guidelines, and train staff in handling personal data. Courses are provided by UIS and the University. It was recommended that training is mandatory for all staff handling personal data should receive (at least) the basic training. It was noted that research grants from NCSC/GCHQ are likely to require departmental computer systems to comply with Cyber-Essentials requirements from NCSC. Moreover, ensuring that our core systems comply with Cyber-Essentials would be prudent.

To comply with GDPR and other data protection rules, the Committee recommended that a member of staff be assigned the role of our data protection compliance officer.

ACTION: MS/DP to review SM's draft GDPR document and to send to the HoD-Team and incoming HoD.

ACTION: SM to collate feedback, discuss via circulation.

5. Standing Items

- (a) MS and DP to provide an update on improvements made and current issues. MS reported that the network and Cisco hardware has reached EOL as Cisco no longer provide updates. We would need to consider replacing this network equipment relatively soon. UIS are starting to offer a departmental network service, so it is proposed to wait and see whether this is a cost-effective replacement (note that we already outsource our WiFi network to UIS). DP reported the AV upgrade in the lecture theatres is planned to take place during the summer months although the exact timeline was not yet known. New printers and DS print would be installed soon. The issue of staff laptops being able to connect to domain was being reviewed. The RT ticketing upgrade was still in progress and the expected date of completion was not clear.
- (b) Report on the School's IT Strategy Committee (AV) and update from UIS (AM). Nothing to report.

6. Staffing (TS)

MS reported that he is working on the exact role spec for the GPU position. DP reported that he was still not yet in a position to advertise the IT Technician position as this is dependent on the RT ticketing upgrade. It was also noted that Piete Brooks is due to retire relatively soon. SM recommend that progress be made hiring new staff before we are so short of staff that it will become difficult for the computer officers to find time to recruit new staff.

7. Department "classroom" facilities (DP)

UIS are withdrawing MCS Windows service on 1st August 2023

DP has discussed with Helen Averill, Lise Gough and Rob Harle and it was agreed that very few, if any, courses need ~20 machines in use all at once. There is a plan to provide some managed machines in rooms running Windows, or to have a pool of laptops available to loan, for the courses that do require computers e.g. to run FPGA design software for Part 1b ECAD+Arch practicals. The Current Linux provision is a server to SSH into, but this service is not suitable for GUI-intensive programs.

8. Draft mail policy (DP)

DP reported that UIS want to withdraw forwarding of @cl, which the department does for all alumni, unless there is a specific need to retain it. The University considers it a reputational risk. This might however imply to alumni that we do not trust them. Email address that are published (e.g. in papers) may be exempt, which is likely to apply for all retired academic staff.

9. Any other business

It was agreed that for future ITSC meetings Hybrid/online format would be the preferred method.

10. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be agreed by circulation.