Terms of Reference of the IT Strategy Committee

Preliminary comments

In general (but with exceptions), it is a principle of Departmental organisation that there is a committee associated with the main Departmental Professional Services Staff (PSS) functions. The role of the IT Strategy Committee is to have oversight of the Department’s IT teams, including supporting the two teams in their interactions with the rest of the Department, and advising the HoD team on their needs. Since we have a new structure and new personnel, the role is currently also to help the teams become properly established, including making sure that appropriate communication structures are in place.

Description of the IT teams

The main role of the IT Infrastructure team is to support the Department’s needs for research infrastructure, including the network and the fileserver (which are used for teaching and administrative purposes too, but where the research needs make off-the-shelf solutions infeasible). Some of this infrastructure also supports teaching: for instance the GPU cluster(s), used for Masters projects and in modules which teach practical use of machine learning.

The IT Support team is more user-facing. It is responsible for the day-to-day needs of the Department, including the use of the Windows systems by administrative staff.

Terms of Reference

The primary role of the IT Strategy Committee is to support and oversee these activities. The committee will ensure that the appropriate Departmental structures are in place and functioning to allow for effective communication and will ensure that the teams own needs are recognised (e.g., budget, staff, space).

Specific points:

1. Ensuring that all new requirements are communicated to the IT teams in a timely fashion: for instance, requirements for additional equipment to support teaching.
2. Ensuring that mechanisms are in place so the needs of the various users in the Department can be responded to effectively.
3. Provide feedback on proposed solutions from a user perspective (but not to formulate solutions). Where appropriate, the IT Strategy Committee will put members of the IT teams in touch with members of the Department who can give technical advice.
4. The committee will support the HoD team in making decisions about large equipment bids and purchases (over £20,000) and will monitor progress on acquisition and deployment of equipment. It will also support the HoD team in making decisions about changes in staffing in the IT teams and provide guidance on funding sources and cost recovery.

The committee will meet at least once a term and minutes will be made available. An annual report will be made to the Faculty Board which will include a summary of spending associated with the IT teams.