

Minutes of the 45th meeting of the UK Computing Research Executive Committee on **Tuesday 31 October 2017** at **11:00** at BCS, The Chartered Institute of IT, Davidson Building, 5 Southampton Street, London, WC2E 7HA.

PRESENT

Ann Blandford (Chair)
Derek McAuley

Anthony Cohn
Jane Hillston

Cliff Jones
David Benyon

BY INVITATION

Adam Luqmani (EPSRC)

Samantha Francis (EPSRC)

IN ATTENDANCE

Maxine Leslie (BCS)

APOLOGIES

Luc Moreau
Bill Mitchell (BCS)
Edmund Robinson (CPHC)

David De Roure
Martyn Thomas
Ahmed Kotb (IET)

Christopher Johnson
Joe Winchester

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME TO NEW PARTICIPANTS

The Chair welcomed Samantha Francis to her first Executive Committee meeting. Unfortunately new Members David De Roure and Luc Moreau had been unable to attend but the Chair welcomed back Cliff Jones who was serving a further term of office.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RECEIVED as above. Cliff Jones undertook to remove outgoing Executive Committee Members from the EC JISCMail list after this meeting. **ACTION: C Jones**

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 June 2017 were APPROVED for transfer to the UKCRC website. **ACTION: Secretariat/D Gladwin**

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Action List was reviewed and the following updates, which would not be covered elsewhere on the agenda, were noted:

UKCRCEC meeting held on 6 June 2017

Item 4.2 Other Matters Arising – Derek McAuley indicated that some ORBIT services are being offered for free at this time. This was felt to be a valuable service but it would be hard to justify its use for the full charge. Samantha Francis offered to speak to ORBIT on Members' behalf. **ACTION: S Francis**

Item 6 Membership Panel – Cliff Jones informed Members that the membership application process was now much smoother. Members were glad to see an improved gender balance amongst the new members. It would be important to ensure that the details on the website were updated to reflect the new practices.

ACTION: Membership Panel/Secretariat/D Gladwin

Item 6.1 Key findings from draft EPSRC E&D report – there had been a good response from the mailing list on the Athena SWAN feedback request. Responses were split between positive experiences and possible problems with the process. The Chair asked if it would be appropriate for UKCRC to approach the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) to take these discussions forward. It was important that UKCRC did not liaise with the ECU independently to EPSRC, particularly in the light of the E&D work being undertaken by the latter. Samantha Francis undertook to check how these responses could be fed into ECU.

ACTION: S Francis

The Chair undertook to collate the mailing list responses.

ACTION: Chair

Item 8.1 EPSRC update – Samantha Francis indicated that there had been lessons learnt from the Human Like Computing call and when we undertake a similar process again, it will be run with these lessons learned in mind. In terms of the concern about short deadlines for funding bids, Samantha confirmed that these were mostly due to the government push for deadlines; deadlines for calls set by EPSRC were mostly 6-8 weeks. Short deadlines were becoming more common with unintended consequences that might not be taken into account when deadlines are set. There was now a checklist for E&D to be published alongside calls, so this should help to address the problems being experienced. Samantha Francis undertook to consider who to contact about this issue and let the Executive Committee know.

ACTION: S Francis

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report. There was some discussion about REF 2021 and the areas of ICT which are covered by UKCRC. Members indicated that UKCRC did not cover electronic engineering, although the wider remit of the IET was computing and electronics. Adam Luqmani undertook to send a sector list to the UKCRC Chair to indicate which areas were covered by UKCRC. *[Post meeting note: action complete.]*

Samantha Francis stated that it would be important to galvanise the community to talk with one voice across the different areas. There might be some challenges given the history around the sector, but this could be discussed at a future meeting.

Derek McAuley undertook to investigate whether there is an equivalent research group which speaks for electronic engineering. If so, it would be good to liaise with them to ensure that there is no duplication of effort or gaps.

ACTION: D McAuley

6. UKCRC ROLES INCLUDING CONSULTATIONS

Members RECEIVED and APPROVED the Roles document with the following amendments:

- Tony Cohn has responsibility for UKCRC website content
- Chris Johnson had taken over responsibility for consultations and submissions
- Jane Hillston was stepping down from IE Board. Jane undertook to nominate someone from UKCRC and IE to take this on in future.

ACTION: J Hillston

The Secretariat undertook to amend and re-circulate the Roles document to the Committee.

ACTION: Secretariat

7. MEMBERSHIP PANEL AND MEMBERSHIP / NETWORK DISCUSSION (plus discussion document attached to Chair's report)

Derek McAuley introduced the paper and outlined a proposal to lay out the role of core computing research so that it is not just a service discipline. Two steps were anticipated:

- 1) decide on the recruitment mechanism, who should attend the first workshop and who would lead on it, involving early career people
- 2) write the Network bid.

It was likely that EPSRC would not wish to start with multiple workshops, preferring a single workshop firstly to scope the landscape in preparation for the bid. It was anticipated that for a small bid of less than £10k, a two page bid would be sufficient. Samantha Francis undertook to speak to John Baird about how this might work and look at the budget. **ACTION: S Francis**

It was suggested that UKCRC Members could be asked to nominate, EPSRC could supply a list of names and new Members of UKCRC could be invited. Members AGREED with the suggestion that Derek McAuley forms a small group to take this forward.

ACTION: D McAuley

8. CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report.

9. RESEARCH FUNDING AND POLICY

9.1 EPSRC Update [A Luqmani/S Francis – verbal]

Adam Luqmani reported that there was ~£500m flat cash available for the Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) call from the previous call. There were 113 CDTs across all areas and it was hoped that BEIS would confirm the uplift. If not, then the amount would be ~£350M. The CDT call is cross disciplinary and will be launched in January 2018 with final funding available in December 2018. The call will be launched followed by an 8 week period to write bids and a selection process including interviews. The priority areas are yet to be finalised but will be used to help EPSRC to ensure that the portfolio is balanced.

There will be one budget across all areas rather than a budget for each priority area, each of which is quite broad. Samantha Francis invited questions from Executive Members or comments to take back. It would be good to know the priority areas as a starting point.

Derek McAuley left the meeting at this point.

Samantha Francis gave Members an update on calls which included Robotics and Artificial Intelligence hubs in extreme environments (for which the results are due soon), new approaches to data science, cross-disciplinary appropriation, human-like computing and University Defence Research Collaborations. Further information is available on the [EPSRC website](#). Other updates were given on calls recently closed, those in progress and those planned for the future. Two workshops were planned on Software Engineering and Ubiquitous Computing (see website for further details). For the E&D project, the next step is to flesh out an action plan to be published alongside the Edinburgh Napier University report in the New Year.

10. REPORTS

10.1. Membership Panel [K Jones]

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report. The Chair informed the Committee that further new UKCRC Members had been welcomed since the report had been written and it was pleasing to see an improvement in the inclusivity of the membership.

10.2. European Matters [J Hillston (IE)/Adam Luqmani (UKRO) – verbal]

Jane Hillston reported that Informatics Europe (IE) had published a draft report into informatics research evaluation which was available via the IE website at <http://www.informatics-europe.org/news/397-draft-report-on-informatics-research-evaluation-released.html>. Research evaluation was a huge topic across Europe and it was likely that there would be a subsequent report to attempt to collate all of this data.

There was also an ACM Europe/IE report into education in schools and the types of ICT education being introduced. The report was in the final stage of production and it was hoped that a translated executive summary would be made available. A further annual report on university data was to be released before Christmas which would provide a good comparison between different countries.

Adam Luqmani updated Members on UKRO activities. There was a SAT sub-group which was looking at the approach to ICT in the international landscape. Early principles were to be set out to illustrate the strategy. EPSRC is keen to map out where there are obvious relationships in ICT between countries and between subject areas.

10.3. CPHC [E Robinson/A Cohn – verbal]

This item was deferred to the joint CPHC/UKCRC joint meeting to follow later in the day.

10.4. BCS Academy [B Mitchell - verbal]

No report as Bill Mitchell had offered his apologies due to illness.

10.5. IET [Ahmed Kotb/D Gladwin – verbal]

No report was presented as Ahmed Kotb had offered his apologies due to illness.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 REF panel nominations <http://www.ref.ac.uk/about/nompan/>

The Chair reported that a small joint UCKRC/CPHC working group been formed which Morris Sloman had agreed to lead with a view to putting together nominations for REF 2021 SP11 Computer Science and Informatics. *[Post meeting note: M Sloman emailed the UKCRC and CPHC memberships for nominations following the meeting.]*

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

Members NOTED the dates as below and AGREED that the AGM would be held via GoToMeeting (GTM) on **Friday 1 December** at **1.00pm** for approximately 1 hour.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2018

Tuesday 13 March 2018 – IET Offices, London

***Tuesday 5 June 2018 – BCS Offices, London**

Tuesday 30 October 2018 – IET Offices, London

*Co-located with the CPHC Committee meeting to be held in the afternoon (TBC). Opportunities to network will be available over lunch at 1pm.

ADDENDUM TO UKCRC EC MINUTES: CPHC-UKCRC COLLABORATIVE WORKING (UKCRC Executive Committee Members joined the CPHC Committee for this item)

PRESENT – CPHC

Carsten Maple (Chair)	Sally Fincher	Keith Miller
Sally Smith	Ray Farmer (<i>by GTM</i>)	
James Davenport (BCS Academy observer)	Anthony Cohn (UKCRC and CPHC observer)	Ian Borthwick (BCS, by invitation)

PRESENT – UKCRC

Ann Blandford (Chair)	David Benyon	Cliff Jones
Jane Hillston	Samantha Francis (EPSRC)	Adam Luqmani (EPSRC)

NB: minutes recorded below are also be included in the CPHC Committee minutes

Welcome

The CPHC Chair welcomed UKCRC Executive Committee Members and Observers and Ian Borthwick, Head of BCS Publishing to the meeting and introductions were made. The Chair opened discussions by outlining the collaborative work being undertaken on gender issues. The email that had been sent via the distribution lists for both Committees generated a lot of interest and it was useful to see how interests of gender are affecting research and teaching in the UK.

Gender Issues

Jane Hillston indicated that one of the results of the consultation was that there were a number of issues with Athena SWAN process. The plan was for UKCRC EC to arrange a meeting with the Equalities Challenge Unit (ECU) to raise these issues. There was some interest in looking at the impact on pedagogy. Computing Science did not seem to have such a high attrition rate for females as other subjects such as chemistry, although it is measured from a lower starting point. This was encouraging as it appeared that teaching processes are not putting off female teaching staff.

The CPHC Chair indicated that one of the aims of CPHC was to support the community in improving its approach to the Athena SWAN process and would welcome suggestions from other organisations on strategies for improving the gender balance. Sally Fincher suggested drawing up an action plan so that efforts in this potentially very broad area can be focussed.

Sally Smith informed the meeting that a workshop on inclusion matters had been held at Newcastle University which had identified some work packages. The plan was to make a bid for funding around different disciplines, including analysis of HESA data for certain groups and mentoring support/leadership development. Carron Shankland was also submitting a bid. Keith Miller pointed out that the HEIs were not homogeneous and that therefore there were a number of challenges in dealing with the data.

Annual meetings

The CPHC and UKCRC Chairs outlined the function of their respective annual meetings. UKCRC held a virtual AGM and CPHC's annual conference was held at different locations around the country with the 2017 conference at Microsoft UK, Reading attended by 70 people. Traditionally the CPHC conference commences with a New Heads Workshop run in parallel to an Athena SWAN workshop. CPHC conferences had previously been co-located with the biennial BCS Research Symposium.

Jane Hillston added that there was also the Women in Computing Committee at BCS from which Cygnets was initiated. Ian Borthwick reminded Members that Naseer Ahmad had been appointed as Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Programme Manager at BCS and undertook to provide contact details to Samantha Francis.

REF Panel

The UKCRC Chair indicated that a list of proposed REF Panel members was being compiled, on which CPHC and BCS would be consulted. It would be good to include some industrial nominees, possibly through BCS.

UKCRC Network bid

The UKCRC Chair informed Members that Derek McAuley on the Executive Committee was leading on getting a network bid proposal drawn up to look at computing research and its future (hot topics for next 5-10 years). The plan was to run an initial workshop for early researchers with equality and diversity in mind. The initial single workshop would be funded using slush funds to draw up the bid for funding of follow up workshops.

Relationships with other organisations – EPC and CaSE

The CPHC Chair stated that closer ties were being forged with the EPC, which had many similarities with CPHC.

The CPHC Chair informed Members that CPHC was also building closer ties with CaSE (Campaign for Science and Engineering) which is an independent advocate for science and engineering, with close links to government. There is a small group that includes CaSE that meets regularly with Jo Johnson. They have good influence, so it was hoped that this link could be a vehicle for specific issues.

BCS / CPHC / UKCRC - Leaders in Computing

Ian Borthwick outlined BCS activities in publishing for schools and HE, in particular in cybersecurity and improving employability. Both Chairs agreed that a computing journal article on rising star academics would be valuable, although teachers and researchers had different skill sets. One idea was to run a joint UKCRC/CPHC workshop to engage future leaders. Samantha Francis indicated that messages about ICT research, so important for the future, would be much more powerful with both CPHC and UKCRC behind it.

ACTION: UKCRC/CPHC Chairs

Relationships with other organisations – IE

Sally Smith indicated that CPHC had become an institutional member of Informatics Europe (IE). Jane Hillston was a member of the IE Executive Board and reported that at a recent IE meeting, there had been strategic level discussions, reports on best practice in research, teaching informatics in universities and also in schools. The CPHC Chair was keen to ensure that CPHC Members saw a direct benefit in IE membership.

Samantha Francis indicated that there was an EPSRC meeting in January 2018 on Equality and Diversity which the CPHC Chair would be welcome to attend. Adam

Luqmani asked Committee Members about their definition of computing and ICT. It was the general view that the remit of CPHC and UKCRC was wider than the computing sciences as it included business, but did not include electronic engineering.

The CPHC Chair indicated that EPSRC would be welcome to attend CPHC Committee meetings in the future and the Secretariat undertook to send the meeting dates to Samantha Francis [*Post-meeting note: this action is now complete*].