

High Performance Computing User Group

Notes on Meeting #1 held 10 March 2017

Members: Michael Davies (PVC Research) (Chair); Hazel Cox (Chemistry, Life Sciences); Nicholas Dowell (BSMS); Anotida Madzvamuse (Mathematics, MPS); Jeremy Maris (ITS Client Services); Thomas Nowotny (Informatics, E&I); Antony Oliver (Genome Centre, Life Sciences); Seb Oliver (Physics, MPS); Fabrizio Salvatore (Physics, MPS); Martin Todd (Geography).

Support: Richard Chambers (REC, MPS); Lesley Rolf (PA to Michael Davies).

Present at this meeting: All members were present.

1. Terms of Reference, Membership.

The draft Terms of Reference from Seb Oliver were discussed and amended. See the separate Terms of Reference document for details.

Main points:

The HPC User Group (HPC-UG) will report to the Research Computing Advisory Group (RCAG) via PVC Davies who is Chair of both groups. The User Group will meet quarterly to align with the RCAG, but initial meetings will be more frequent.

The RCAG deals with storage, infrastructure, and HPC operational matters. The HPC-UG will focus on the nature, quantity and scope of user requirements.

HPC-UG will receive reports back from the RCAG (via the PVC), and input from the user base via the UG members. It is important that members represent views from a range of stakeholders within their academic units.

ACTION: A webpage for HPC user committee to be set up (linked to from the existing WWW pages for HPC user guidelines). List of members, terms of reference and notes of these meetings to be held there.

ACTION
JM

2. Funding and charging of HPC at Sussex

Main points:

Schools requiring only limited or intermittent HPC service may not be willing to co-fund to the same extent. How to fund flexible access? Funding is currently part university-level, part research grant income.

There is a need to clarify what is 'backbone' service, (basic level general user service, perhaps university funded), and a more resource-intensive advanced service, funded via research grants or from other sources.

Funding must cover depreciation so that HPC is sustainable into the future (maintenance & replacement costs).

ACTION: Devise a 'template' for PI's to use in grant applications, together with guidance on costing (as a directly-allocated cost). This would be held on the above webpage.

ACTION
JM/SJO?

ACTION: DRaKEs should ensure that all grant applications have HPC costings, where the funder allows.

ACTION
DRaKEs

ACTION: JM will prepare a short paper on HPC funding models in use at other universities. HPC-UG will propose a policy on how to fund and charge for HPC at Sussex.

ACTION
JM

3. Next Meeting

End of April 2017.
