Minutes of the 63rd meeting of the UK Computing Research Executive Committee on Monday 26 June 2023 at 11:00, BCS Offices, Ground Floor, 25 Copthall Avenue, London EC2R 7DN and online

PRESENT

Kevin Jones (Chair)	*Andy Gordon	Julie McCann
#David De Roure	*Amir Hussain	*Jie Xu
*#Simon Dobson		

BY INVITATION

Nadia Berthouze (Membership Panel Chair)	Rashik Parmar (BCS)	Alex Taylor (IET)

IN ATTENDANCE
 *Ruth Lehane (BCS)

APOLOGIES

Michael Fisher	David Hutchison	Alastair Irons (BCS Academy)
Julia Adamson (BCS)	Rob Aspin (CPHC)	Laura McDonnell (EPSRC)

*Joined online; #Joined for part of the meeting

1.   WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed Executive Committee members to the meeting and apologies were received as above. Introductions were made and the Chair explained that the Academy Board meeting was happening at the same time as this meeting and that a joint meeting would follow after a networking lunch. Apologies had consequently been received from A Irons, J Adamson and R Aspin who were attending the Academy Board meeting.

2.   MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – Tuesday 7 March 2023 (UKCRC/2023/04)

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 7 March 2023 were APPROVED and are now ready for transfer to the UKCRC website. *[Post meeting note: action complete]*

3.   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

UKCRCEC meeting held on 7 March 2023
Matters arising, item 3 International matters (7.6) – for the action for members to provide any points of contact which might help to improve the visibility of UKCRC, especially in government, Exec members with good contacts in scientific advisory boards were invited to come forward as it is important to broaden this out, with formation of a specific action group. This action remains open.

Chair's report, item 4 – for the action for members to consider volunteering for the role of Consultations and Submissions representative, no-one has yet put their name forward. It was emphasised that the role will be more of a coordinator role than was previously the case and it was an important role as a way of getting the views of UKCRC heard, although individuals still respond to specific calls. Exec members were encouraged to nominate themselves for the role.

R Parmar commented that BCS draws on the expertise of BCS Fellows that sit on a technical advisory group with links to the policy team. This is called F-TAG, see https://www.bcs.org/policy-and-influence/bcs-fellows-technical-advisory-group-f-tag/.

A Taylor has taken on responsibility for the Policy and Insight team at IET and suggested that there may be something that can be done more formally from there, which she would be keen to help coordinate.

K Jones suggested that it would be useful to synchronise the two groups (Technical Advisory Group and IET) and that the action will be carried forward.

UKCRCEC meeting held on 25 October 2022
Matters arising, item 3 REF results (8) – for the action for members to contact the Secretariat if they are interested in meeting with EPSRC to discuss REF results and lessons learnt, it was noted that EPSRC is not currently in a good position in terms of resource which is also evident in that no-one was available to attend the meeting today. The action will held open and looked at during the next meeting.

Matters arising, item 3 Strategy day (10) – it had been agreed that rather than a physical meeting, the strategy day should be held online. The action will be held open.

UKCRCEC meeting held on 7 June 2022
Reports, item 7.1 – for the action for the Exec to think about potential members and communicate names to N Berthouze, it was noted that there had been no recent nominations. Every member of Exec has been asked to think of someone who will be suitable. They should then confirm with the individual that they are happy to be nominated before contacting N Berthouze. All that is required is a recommendation from a current member and up to date CV. Membership from individuals in industry should be encouraged as UKCRC is currently very academia heavy. Action will be held open.

UKCRCEC meeting held on 8 March 2022
Chair's report, item 4 – for the action to work on revising the UKCRC mission statement, a task and finish group will be established to devise and draft a new mission statement to circulate to the Exec before being circulated to the members for comment and improvement. The aim will be to have that completed before the joint conference. Action to be carried over.
ACTION: M Leslie/K Jones

K Jones explained that he had been meeting with A Irons (ACB Chair) and R Aspin (CPHC Chair) on a monthly basis. Recent discussions included working on a statement to outline how, even though each group is separate, the work can overlap. The presence of the IET and BCS at the joint conference would be hugely advantageous.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT [K Jones – verbal]

Increasing UKCRC visibility & funding: K Jones stated that one of the actions was to initiate activity to increase visibility. UKCRC has changed in character from the early days when it comprised about 10 people who knew each other and sensed a need to form the group. Since then it has obviously grown much larger, engaging with BCS and the IET, but has become less coherent.

There is a discussion to be had about how much the Exec communicate with the membership. The Exec need to know what communication the membership would like however, as there is a risk of spamming. The Exec is aware that members are willing to be involved but there needs to be clarification about what that involvement looks like. This should come from the revised vision statement.

R Parmar underlined that we have amazing organisations with huge capabilities and more could be done with those talents and capabilities. It is apparent that IT is going through a major change but there has been an erosion in trust and big Silicon Valley organisations are being questioned. It will be interesting to see who will emerge as the leaders – the Middle East, the UK, China? UKCRC can certainly play a role in leading the change.

Members discussed the origin and structure of UKCRC, which was established and now is sponsored by the IET and BCS, each of which has its own funding and legal entities. However, this sponsorship only extends to secretariat support for Exec meetings, the Membership Panel, elections, the AGM and website hosting and administration and as a result there is no budget for activities such as the mentoring initiative and attendance at Informatics Europe meetings. Another consideration is that the UKCRC membership is an ageing population.

R Parmar explained that he was fairly new to BCS and that there had recently been a restructure with the appointment of Holly Porter as Managing Director (BCS Institute) and Julia Adamson as Managing Director (BCS Education & Public Benefit). J Adamson has driven success with Barefoot and CAS but there is work to do be done regarding the accreditation of university degrees. R Parmar sympathised with both sides in relation to funding.

A Gordon asked whether BCS and the IET could rebuild UKCRC with the help of Fellows of the Royal Society.

A Taylor explained that she had taken on responsibility for the Policy team at the IET 12 months ago. They will be focusing on Digital Futures but don't have the depth of experience that UKCRC has. A Taylor also agreed that funding would help but UKCRC must be aware that all activities would come under scrutiny and cases for funding would have to be very clear. Any work undertaken must not clash with, or undermine the IET's activities and impact would need to be demonstrated. There is a need to build on that partnership but it needs to be mutually beneficial. With more funding comes scrutiny and risk.

K Jones confirmed that it is a rebuilding process. Many UKCRC members have individual connections that are not reflected within the Exec. There is also a need to engage people early in their careers, who might be able to commit more time to UKCRC activities. N Berthouze indicated that the recent change to the membership criteria will hopefully help. A Taylor suggested differing levels or categories of membership to appeal to those at different stages in their careers. The IET already has some of those structures in place.

K Jones impressed the need for the roles of the different bodies to be properly outlined and identified. UKCRC is fundamentally about research activities and the quality and visibility of that research should be promoted. The mission statement must be accurate and visible.

Royal Society SC0 Nominations Working Group: the Chair reported that the Working Group had met in April and suggested names of people who may be put forward to the Royal Society as Fellowship nominations. Traditionally Fellows have been mathematicians or engineers but that is now broadening.

BCS Awards & Prizes review: the Chair reported that the recent review was focussed on the Lovelace Medal and the Roger Needham Award. The aim of the changes was to re-invigorate the perceived value of the awards. Revised criteria had been circulated and nominations invited. The Award Selection Panels being held later in the summer will include representation from UKCRC.

5. CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS [TBA]

As the role of Consultations and Submissions co-ordinator on the Executive Committee is yet to be appointed, there was no report. It was noted that some responses have been made

independently but these have not been co-ordinated at UKCRC level. K Jones impressed again the importance of having an Executive Committee member in this role.

K Jones invited the members to read, comment and add weight to the open letter written by BCS about the need to for AI to be funded and understood. There is a need for investment and for the government to be fully informed.

There are currently no other consultations to respond to but the request was made to forward any that may benefit from a response to either K Jones or the secretariat. **ACTION: Members**

6.   RESEARCH FUNDING AND POLICY

6.1 EPSRC Update

As mentioned above, an EPSRC representative had not been available to attend the meeting. K Jones reiterated that resources were stretched and currently there are not enough peer reviewers. There is a high dependency on volunteers, but academics have little time to engage at the level of commitment required.

It is hoped that there will be representation at the next meeting. If anyone has any contact with funding bodies, it would be useful to find out how UKCRC can have more influence.

7.   REPORTS

7.1 Membership Panel [N Berthouze] – N Berthouze confirmed that there is nothing to report. As discussed earlier, there is a need a find suitable candidates for membership, ideally those in their early career or from industry.

7.2 International Matters inc Informatics Europe [J Xu] – J Xu noted that he had been unable to attend an Informatics Europe event in April due to lack of funding (see above) but it was important to maintain the connection and will attend meeting online where possible.

Important issues for IE are AI in informatics education and the use of ChatGPT and they are keen to strengthen collaborative links with UKCRC.

7.3 CPHC [R Aspin] – (see also the joint meeting). A Hussain had attended the meeting of the CPHC Committee in May where the 2024 CPHC Conference had been discussed. Results from the feedback questionnaire had been reviewed and suggestions made on improving attendance levels. There had been offers from Warwick and Coventry to host the next conference and the Industry Development Group were trying to encourage an increase in membership from industry.

7.4 BCS Academy [A Irons] – this item was deferred to the joint meeting.

7.5 IET [A Taylor] – A Taylor explained that she attended the meeting to understand and unpick the connection between the bodies and to recognise where the IET fits in. A Taylor has colleagues in the research and publishing fields who may also be able to contribute.

D De Roure stated that he is responsible for website and thanked the IET and A Taylor for maintaining it. A Taylor noted that that the website is out of date and cumbersome and due an update. N Berthouze suggested a pictorial representation of how all of the groups connect together would be very useful.

8.   JOINT 2024 CONFERENCE WITH CPHC AND BCS ACADEMY

The Chair spoke about the intention to hold a joint conference which covers both education and research. CPHC hold an annual conference and UKCRC are always invited to attend and speak. Discussion is currently underway as it is not yet clear how this will work.

If anyone is interested in assisting with organising, please contact K Jones.

ACTION: Members

9. COMMITTEE ROLES (UKCRCEC/2023/08)

The Mentoring Programme is currently on hold and A Gordon had nothing further to report.

The Chair referred back to the earlier agenda item appealing for someone to co-ordinate consultations and submissions.

It was also noted that recent elections to the Membership Panel should ensure the group is stable for a while.

10. DATES OF 2024 MEETINGS INC AGM (UKCRCEC/2023/09)

R Lehane confirmed dates and locations of future meetings, as detailed below.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair confirmed the committee members were welcome to attend the joint meeting but slides would be circulated for the Exec to feedback (see below).

12.   DATE & VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 24 October 2023 (11:00-13:00) – University of Edinburgh, 10 Crichton Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9AB, co-located with the Informatics Europe European Computer Science Summit.

AGM 2023
Friday 1 December 2023 (14:00-15:00) – Online

2024 Executive Committee meetings
Tuesday 5 March (11:00-13:00) – Online
Tuesday 11 June (11:00-13:00) – Online
*Tuesday 8 October (11:00-14:30) – BCS London
to include networking lunch and joint meeting with CPHC Committee

AGM 2024
Friday 6 December (12:00-13:00) – Online

UKCRC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN AT MEETINGS 2022-3

Outstanding Actions in Red

No.	Item	Item No.	Decision/Action	Responsibility	Complete
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 26 June 2023					
3	MATTERS ARISING: Chair's report (8 Mar 2022)		Establish a task and finish group to draft a new UKCRC mission statement for circulation to the Exec and then members	M Leslie/K Jones	On-going

5	**CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS**		Forward any consultations that would benefit from a UKCRC-wide response to either K Jones or M Leslie	Members	On-going
8	**JOINT 2024 CONFERENCE WITH CPHC/BCS ACADEMY**		Contact K Jones or M Leslie if interested in contributing to Conference arrangements	Members	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 7 March 2023					
3	**MATTERS ARISING: International matters (25 Oct 2022)**	7.2	Provide any points of contact which might help to improve the visibility of UKCRC, especially in government	Members	On-going
4	**CHAIR'S REPORT**		Consider volunteering for the role of consultations & submissions rep, which will be more of a co-ordinating/overseeing than previously was the case; call to be circulated *[26 Jun update: look at synchronising the BCS Technical Advisory Group and the IET Policy & Insight team]*	Members/ M Leslie	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 25 October 2022					
3	**REF results**	8	Contact Secretariat if interested in meeting with EPSRC to discuss REF results	Members	On-going
	Strategy day	10	Arrange Strategy day for all of Exec and invited parties *[26 Jun update: now to be conducted online]*	M Leslie/K Jones	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 7 June 2022					
7	**REPORTS**	7.1	Exec to think about potential members and communicate names to N Berthouze	Exec members	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 8 March 2022					
4	**CHAIR'S REPORT**		Email to be sent to members inviting them to be involved with work on vision statement. To be sent in conjunction with skills list *[incorporated into action from 26 June 2023 above]*	K Jones / Secretariat	On-going

(A)   Joint meeting with CPHC & UKCRC

<u>UKCRC Executive Committee members in attendance</u>
Kevin Jones (Chair), Julie McCann, Alex Taylor (IET)
<u>BCS Academy of Computing Board members in attendance:</u> Alastair Irons (Chair), Anthony Cohn, Kevin Chalmers, Tom Crick
<u>BCS staff in attendance:</u> Rashik Parmar, Julia Adamson, Ashley Larkin
<u>CPHC Committee members in attendance</u>
Rob Aspin (Chair), Nicky Danino, James Davenport, Edmund Robinson, John Woodward, Parveen Samra, *Paul Sant, *Rebecca Strachan, *Johnny Wallace, Haris Mouratidis
*Joined online

- Plans for joint 2024 Conference
- Joint activity statement
  See slides

A Irons talked those present through the slides which had been jointly produced by the three Chairs (R Aspin, K Jones & A Irons), following which the floor was opened up for the following questions and areas of discussion (plus any others that were raised):

- What are the subjects for the 3-way overlap on the Venn Diagram?
- What are the joint activities and how do we further them ? Eg mentoring, staff development, environment and culture
- Joint conference – every 2 years? Format and structure – what do we want to achieve
- How do we create a platform for this combined voice?

For the combined objectives, it would be helpful to also bring in the IET and other related professional bodies. Members were invited to amend the Venn diagram if there are omissions/errors. 'Grand Challenges' was judged to be old fashioned terminology and RA suggested 'Moon shot.' UKCRC was the most focussed of the three groups, covering research and the impact of that research.

ACTION: Members to send any suggested amendments to Venn diagram to the Chair

JA indicated that BCS is developing an approach to the learned society of the future with the first step being to understand more about the landscape. The landscape review report produced by the BCS Schools Curriculum and Assessment Committee (SCAC) had proved very valuable and had been used in policy documents. The plan is to do an 'HE temperature check' with 12 HEIs and anyone interested was invited to contact the BCS Education & Public Benefit team via the Meeting Secretary.

The group discussed the proposed 2024 conference/event and made the following observations and suggestions:

- What is the pitch of the event and who should attend, maybe not just members of the three organisations? Could use our convening power to showcase Computer Science as a discipline, as a research area and/or a policy piece; could be a 'summit' (T Crick)
- More of a symposium than a conference, to share practice and encourage discussion (N Danino)
- The event and any workshops could be useful for producing output/artefacts (A Irons)
- For the CPHC Conference, the key value lies in bringing people together from different academic departments to network and discuss key issues such as AI and strategy (R Aspin)
- Could also cover REF/KEF and links to learned society issues (K Jones)
- Academic accreditation disrupts every 5 years and then goes away, it would be interesting to hear what Heads actually think (K Chalmers)
- How to get as many people to attend as possible? (A Irons)
- Now is the moment to convene different forces in computing as it underpins so much in society and can't just happen in isolation. Maybe should go after big corporates to sponsor awards and showcase game changing work and academic excellence; happy to invite or 'convene' potential participants (R Parmar)
- Communication with general public is really important, currently very narrow interpretation of computing and a great deal of fear of AI, not recognising the UK's contribution to it. Can't really start on the equity piece until this is done (F McNeill)
- For the wider societal impact of computing, there may be a policy angle about how use the convening power of the three groups, by showcasing world leading research. REF, KEF and TEF are not as important in Wales. There is an advocacy piece to say CS is broad and has a significant impact eg the impact of cloud computing on water consumption, resource implications of streaming services and how to influence public and policy makers in this (T Crick)
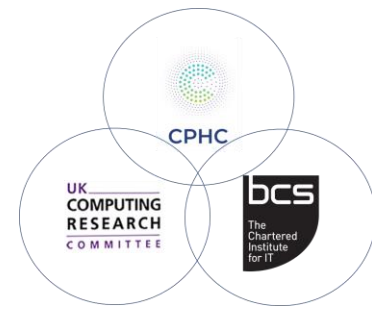- Good topic to discuss would be the question of 'what is computing' (J McCann)

- Computing is ubiquitous but digital literacy is not (K Chalmers)
- Digital poverty and the digital divide is also linked – the impact on those left behind (A Irons)
- What is the output from this event? Shouldn't be standalone but should connect into the next step. Using the BCS links to industry would be helpful (as the IET do) and using all three organisations' networks to market; could include evening meal with a speaker similar to the CPHC Conference (P Samra)
- Important to build in sustainability and make sure that success is repeated in future (T Crick)
- Agreed, more like a 'manifesto' to monitor and progress (A Irons)
- Computing is becoming broader, so one area of discussion could be inclusion of those with special abilities, particularly as many jobs require social skills (N Danino)
- Could put on Needham and/or Lovelace events at summit in future years (2023 round will be in autumn 2023), which would be a good way to advertise (A Cohn)

Members AGREED to proceed with a 2024 joint event and to the establishment of a planning working group comprising representatives from each of the three organisations. *[Post meeting note: it was subsequently agreed that there should be two representatives from each organisation on the WG]*

ACTION: Chairs to nominate two representatives each from ACB, CPHC and UKCRC to join the 2024 event planning working group

Actions from Joint ACB/CPHC/UKCRC meeting 26 June 2023

Min	Item	Action	Who	Status
A	Collaborative working	Send any suggested amendments to Venn diagram to AI	All	On-going
		Nominate two representatives each from ACB, CPHC and UKCRC to join the 2024 event planning working group	Chairs	On-going

CPHC, UKCRC and BCS

Rob Aspin, Kevin Jones and Alastair Irons

26th June 2023

Objectives

- To share and discuss plans for UKCRC, CPHC and BCS Academy Board and how will work together to promote computing and computer science and associated disciplines

- Discuss the aspiration to have a shared vision and speak with voice in policy and strategy development

- Give colleagues the opportunity to discuss opportunities and challenges

- Consider the opportunity and objectives of a combined conference in 2024

Organisation Overview

- CPHC
  - Represent the interest, concerns and challenges, of UK HE computing departments to institutions, government, collective bodies and industry
  - Enhance the environment, culture and leadership in UK HE computing departments
- UKCRC
  - Promote the impact of computing research in the UK
  - Make sure that UK computing research is recognised across the world
- BCS Academy Board of Computing
  - Represent the academy in the BCS objectives, pillars and governance
  - Promote professionalism in the discipline
- Combined
  - All 3 groups cross represented on each other's Boards / Committees

CPHC Key Responsibilities

- Represent academic departments in the development of responsible leadership and the provisioning of cultures, environments and practices that enable teaching, research and academic careers to flourish.

- Enable academic computing departments to have a single voice to challenge, collaborate, discuss and present collective views to academic institutions, government, parliamentary committees, industry, and other relevant bodies

- To advance public education in the core subject of Computer Science and in the wider context of Computing and its applications. In furtherance of this object but not further or otherwise the Council shall have power to:
  - Consider matters affecting research, scholarship and learning in Computing within Universities, and their interaction with professional practice;
  - Promote quality and professionalism in Computing;
  - Formulate and express the views of senior academics in Computing on such matters and make recommendations to appropriate bodies;
  - Do all such other lawful things necessary for the furtherance of the objects.

- In essence: Supporting and representing UK HE academic departments in developing and enhancing the Leadership, Culture and Environment within departments to deliver high quality education, research and other scholarly activity

UKCRC Key Responsibilities

- The UK Computing Research Committee aims to promote the vitality, quality and impact of Computing **Research** in the UK.

- Its members are internationally leading computer researchers drawn from both academia and industry.

- Advancement of the science and application of computing, particularly by contributions of UK researchers, as recognised at the highest international level of excellence.

- Promote a cohesive and effective sense of community among individuals and groups involved in UK computing research.
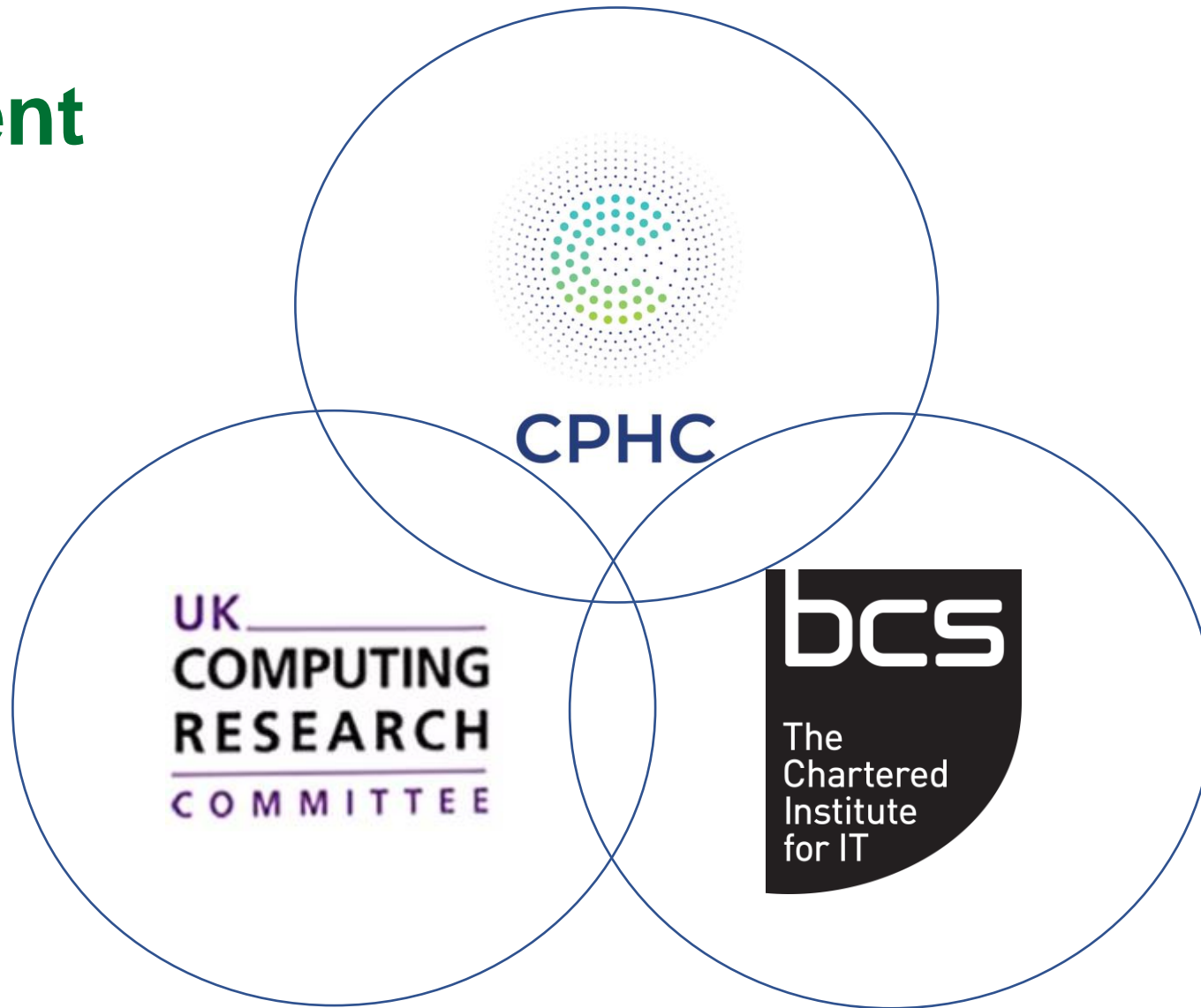
BCS Academy Board Key Responsibilities

- Advance the creation, study and application of knowledge in computing for the benefit of the public

- This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Promote the benefits, successes and challenges of computer science and engineering through public engagement
  - Establish computing as a core academic discipline at every level of education
  - Develop and support a cohesive community with a shared commitment to the advancement of computing
  - Develop and support initiatives that promote equity, equality, diversity and inclusivity in education and research
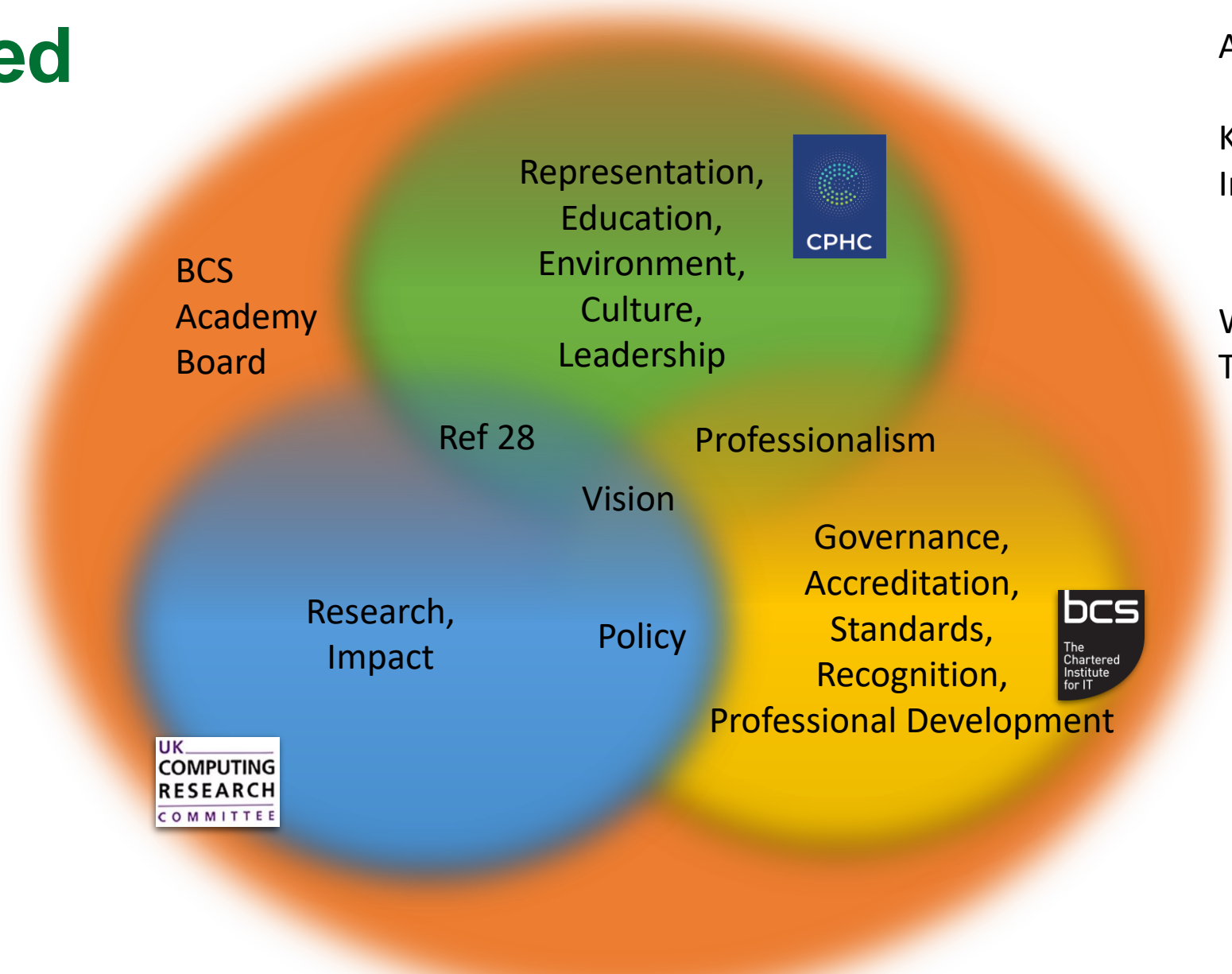
Combined Objectives

- Speak with one voice for Computer Science and Computing on national and international policy

- Promote the importance of Computer Science and Computing to the benefit of society

- Embed equity, equality, diversity and inclusion in Computing and Computer Science

- Promote reward and recognition in the disciplines

- Create strategy (grand challenges)
  - computing education;
  - curriculum development;
  - research and development;
  - enhancement of the discipline

Combined Environment

Combined

Representation, Education, Environment, Culture, Leadership

BCS Academy Board

Ref 28

Professionalism

Vision

Research, Impact

Policy

Governance, Accreditation, Standards, Recognition, Professional Development

Areas not covered

Knowledge Exchange
Industry engagement

Workforce planning
Talent pool

Discussion

- Potential topics – but open to all questions

    - What are the subjects for the 3 way overlap on the Venn Diagram ?

    - What are the joint activities and how do we further them ?
        - eg mentoring, staff development, environment and culture

    - Joint conference – every 2 years ?
        - Format and structure – what do we want to achieve

    - How do we create a platform for this combined voice?