

Minutes of the 61st meeting of the UK Computing Research Executive Committee on Tuesday 25 October 2022 at 11:00, held at BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, 25 Cophall Avenue, London, EC2R 7DN and online

PRESENT

Kevin Jones (Chair)	*Andy Gordon	*Jane Hillston
David De Roure	Amir Hussain	David Hutchison
Michael Fisher	*Chris Johnson	*Simon Dobson

BY INVITATION

Rob Aspin (CPHC)	Nadia Berthouze (Membership Panel Chair)	*Alastair Irons (BCS Academy)
*Ahmed Kotb (IET)	Rachel Lamb (EPSRC)	

IN ATTENDANCE

*Maxine Leslie (BCS)	**Abigail Edwards (BCS)	**Sarah Foxall (BCS)
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APOLOGIES

Julie McCann	Jie Xu	Bill Mitchell (BCS alternate)
Michelle Busson (IET)	Julia Adamson (BCS)	Glenn Goodall (EPSRC)

**Joined online*; #*Joint meeting rewards item only*

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- 📌 Actions arising from UKCRC Executive Committee as at 25 October 2022
- 📌 Minutes of joint UKCRC/CPHC meeting

1. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS, GOODBYE TO MEMBERS STEPPING DOWN AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed Executive Committee members to the meeting and apologies were received as above. It was good to have a F2F meeting after such a long time. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Chair thanked Jane Hillston and Chris Johnson, whose terms of office come to an end in November, for all they have done in the last 6 years. The Chair also welcomed new members Simon Dobson and Julie McCann (who had sent apologies) and welcomed David Hutchison back for his second term of office.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – Tuesday 7 June 2022 [UKCRC/2022/10]

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 7 June 2022 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 June 2022

Matters arising 8 March 2022, item 3: RS Sectional Committee Nominations – the Secretariat undertook to arrange an online meeting for this in January 2023. **ACTION: M Leslie**

Item 8: REF results – it was agreed that a separate meeting should be set up to include a subset of the Exec and EPSRC. Interested parties to contact M Leslie. **ACTION: Members**

Item 10: Diarising the strategy day – members agreed that a separate strategy meeting should be held to discuss the role of UKCRC and actions going forward, to involve all of the Exec plus invited members.

ACTION: M Leslie/K Jones

UKCRCEC meeting held on 26 October 2021

Item 5: Consultations and submissions – the Consultations Working Group has not yet been established but could be restarted once the consultations and submissions role has been taken up.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT [K Jones – verbal]

Meetings of the Chairs of UKCRC, BCS and CPHC are underway and include producing a short document to lay out the relative positions of the three organisations. Broadly UKCRC for research, BCS as the professional body and CPHC as HE's representative body within Computer Science.

From the UKCRC side, it will be helpful to make a clear statement about its role of representation and lobbying for the research community in the UK, to be discussed further at the strategy day. Factors to be considered include comments that UKCRC is not visible enough and the difficulties that it's usually the same small number of members that contribute to responses to consultations. It could be helpful if a *group* of people within the Exec take responsibility for particular roles such as consultations and submissions, to ensure the burden on one member is not too great and to share the calls to action. C Johnson noted (in the chat) that a lot of the CSA work eg, pre-formal consultation is "Official Sensitive" so while UKCRC and CPHC members can get involved, wider circulation to all UKCRC members is not possible. There are further actions such as improving visibility of UKCRC in the virtual space, such as on the website and do implement more active lobbying of interested parties.

C Johnson and A Kotb posted details of consultations in the chat (see 'Other consultations' at the end of these minutes).

It was noted that, in addition to the research mentoring programme (see item 9 below), Alan Hayes of Bath is leading an HE community of practice, which was an initiative of the BCS Academy, CPHC and a BCS and community of practice to which UKCRC is welcome to join. D De Roure indicated that work is underway with EPSRC and UKRI in this area, particularly in the area of digital skills.

It was agreed that it would help to have a test case of how UKCRC, CPHC and BCS is working together. Mentoring is a good place to start, in particular to promote a culture of willingness to volunteer to be a citizen within the community, for both junior and senior colleagues. A concerted effort is needed to grow this as people are wary of stepping out of their own niche. A Irons commented that there was wholesale support from CS academics for a mentoring programme and pedagogic research in the computer science community was an additional motivator, with interest expressed in having high profile research mentors, leading to establishment of a research strand in addition to a teaching and learning strand.

It will be good to have a holistic approach to the CPHC Chair in 10 Years, New Heads workshop and mentoring programmes to support academic staff for the next promotion.

There is unclear that all three bodies share the same vision of CS/computing and Exec members had a discussion about the definition of CS including the following points:

- Detailed definitions differ and are often quite old although the context of the discipline has changed (KJ)
- What is CS within the context of the REF? The balance does not seem correct though and it might be useful to consider the connection of UKCRC with other communities.

There is a link between what UKCRC is doing and what the ICT SAT does and it would be good to see what this relationship is and the core and application of CS in its broadest sense (DH)

- Three different perspectives: what counts as research (REF panel), what's taught and also what's funded by Research Councils (ICT). Taking these categories, there may be a common core, should UKCRC take on defining CS research? (KJ)
- QAA Benchmark document brings in an additional perspective (AI)
- The REF sub panel is all about storing/processing, but there is not much about topics. This needs to be looked at to see if it is modern enough and where the boundaries sit (DH)
- Without a clear purpose for the definition then it would be wasted work as one would hope that the definition would continually change and be open to wide interpretation (CJ). Any definition would be in danger of becoming out of date almost as soon as it was made. Some institutions have already expanded into a larger definition of Informatics, partly because they do not want to be constrained by perception of what falls within computer science (JH)
- CS is all pervasive, almost every discipline has some in there. Leads into interdisciplinary part of the REF. There is reluctance to embrace interdisciplinary. Need to think about how to support and encourage for 2027 (AI)
- Should be able to answer the question of what is it without going into existential discussions that are pointless eg, what mentoring is today and should it be different going forward? Is it legacy and not activity? It would be good to scope this (KJ)
- For EPSRC portfolio areas, when a grant application is received a decision is made as to whether it is interdisciplinary with colleagues in different parts of UKRI. There is a reluctance to reject but vagueness as to which bucket it belongs to needs to be avoided as coding is important for government funding. The ICT team is wider than just CS, eg electronics, SE and the REF definition is different (RL)
- This is important to do, eg there is no agreed definition for AI and this creates a war zone when trying to get funding (MF)
- For different definitional frameworks, could review for commonality. This would be good for all three bodies and for industry (KJ)
- A taxonomy of computer science will be of little value to those outside of the discipline if it is not then mapped onto the things that policy makers and the public care about (CJ)

Members AGREED that a sub-group should be formed, led by D Hutchison to look at the scope, definition and boundaries of CS&I (Computer Science & Informatics). The three Chairs will agree on the piece of space that this relates to, and Exec members were invited to volunteer to join the sub-group to look into this area. N Berthouze expressed her willingness to get involved from an HCI angle and R Lamb was happy to contribute. *[Post meeting note: action complete as Michael Fisher, Dave De Roure and Simon Dobson volunteered for the sub-group to look at Computer Science scope, definition, and boundaries and D Hutchison circulated a draft set of aims for the UKCRC activity]*

5. CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS [C Johnson]

UKCRC/2022/13

RECEIVED and NOTED the report. C Johnson noted that there was currently a freeze on consultations and submissions activities due to the leadership elections. He had met with the CSA group, DfT and Nadim Zahawi (when Chancellor) and talked about UKCRC and issues of resilience and computational infrastructures. This was briefly a hot topic in government, as the policy doesn't align well. Computation is essential from a government point of view, in the way that it applies to the real world. Translating taxonomy work into what the world can relate to is crucial.

The bigger problem for CS research as a discipline is to communicate with others why CS is important to all. The main areas of research that are of interest to government departments

are those that map onto ARIA. B Mitchell and his Policy team at BCS are often consulted through less usual channels, as may be the case for UKCRC members. Areas include the impact of climate change, digital sovereignty in the realm and AI. K Jones asked about the balance between effort and value, given the low responses and the disproportionate level of effort needed by C Johnson, should there be different pipelines? C Johnson replied that it depends on the volunteers available. It is easier to have influence when UKCRC is working with BCS and the IET and this area of activity is a key one for UKCRC. It also depends on how officials in government departments handle consultations and this has improved in terms of understanding the basics of how computer networks operate. CSAs in particular are very receptive and the [DCMS College of Experts](#) has provided a structure which has helped the digital team at DCMS.

A Kotb indicated that, although KPIs come into it, enquiries and evidence are prioritised within the IET. Consultations can be circulated to the membership with a 'Policy Key' to make them more succinct.

6. RESEARCH FUNDING AND POLICY

6.1 EPSRC Update [R Lamb] (UKCRC/2022/14) – RECEIVED and NOTED the report.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Membership panel [N Berthouze] – an application for membership had been recently received, but it would be good to encourage further applications and there was an action from the June 2022 meeting for the Exec to think about potential members and communicate potential names to N Berthouze.

7.2 International Matters inc Informatics Europe [J Xu] – J Xu had sent apologies for the meeting but had submitted the following update by email. Informatics Europe and several national Informatics associations will be jointly organising a workshop on 26 October in connection to the ECSS 2022 conference. The workshop is about open science and the future of research dissemination in informatics. J Xu had attended, on behalf of UKCRC, an online meeting in April that prepared for the workshop and decided its main topics, including 1) rethinking the role of Informatics conferences, 2) open access publication models for Informatics, and 3) open data and research data management in Informatics. In particular, the work on formulating European policy recommendations on these topics (to be organised as three task forces) will continue based on the discussion during the workshop. UKCRC is expected to join and support one of the taskforces.

Neither J Xu nor K Jones had been available to attend the October workshop, but K Jones noted that UKCRC representation is only currently possible if members will be at events in another capacity, as there is no UKCRC income stream. Another option is to look into funding possibilities with BCS and the IET as UKCRC has a poor track record for attending. J Hillston reported that the IE European Computer Science Summit (ECSS) will be held in Edinburgh next year, coinciding with the planned Exec meeting as it runs from 23-25 October. It will be important for the UK to engage as continuing to keep allies in Europe at the moment is essential. Exec members and/or the Chair undertook to discuss attendance and liaise with J Hillston on this.

ACTION: Chair/members

7.3 CPHC [R Aspin] – appointments to Committee had been agreed at the AGM including co-opting new members. The three Chairs are putting together a plan of how CPHC, UKCRC and BCS can work together and how each is positioned and will be discussed later at the joint meeting. The Learning and Development Group (LDG) is continuing and two further groups are being set up for Industry (IDG) and Careers (CDG). There are two new members of Committee from Northern Ireland institutions and their support is being planned for activities in this area. Also under discussion are plans for re-establishing Distinguished Dissertations

with BCS, CPHC website development and a workshop to explore recruitment and retention in HEIs, to be hosted by A Irons at Abertay University.

7.4 BCS Academy [A Irons] *[taken after Membership Panel report]* – the review of BCS accreditation is now in phase 3 and it is now a BCS product. There has been a major revamp of BCS awards and prizes to consolidate their management and address diversity and inclusion. There are issues on funding for CAS and BCS is working closely across agencies. A Irons had attended the IFIP General Assembly to re-establish links with them. After some difficulty, the UK has now been re-elected to the GA.

7.5 IET [A Kotb] – the digital skills survey is being distributed to 1,000 employees this year. There will be a launch event at Savoy Place on 12 December and discussions about the Online Safety Bill which includes some contentious issues, but will help in making online safety future proof. In addition, individuals are being engaged in keeping an eye on Metaverse safeguarding, with a view to including an amendment to include a glossary of terms.

8. REF (Research Excellence Framework) results – see item 3 Matters arising above.

9. Mentoring programme for Computer Science researchers in the UK [A Gordon]
[UKCRC/2022/15]

A Gordon ran through the previously circulated slides and invited feedback on the plan. N Berthouze asked if there would be a member from the academic and a member from the industry side and A Gordon indicated that he had not designed the form yet, but will consider including this and invited those interested in getting formally involved to contact him.

To ensure that good mentors can be used again, it is planned that both mentors and mentees are surveyed at the end of the process. C Johnson noted (in the chat) that NASA have a mentoring scheme where you meet in groups to avoid conflict eg, 2 mentors and 3-4 mentees as their can be frictions 1 to 1. In terms of a web presence, A Gordon indicated that a hub open source website may be the best solution.

CPHC Committee and BCS staff joined the meeting online at this point, so the remaining business was postponed, to be dealt with offline.

10. COMMITTEE ROLES

10.1 Annual election of Chairperson *[Post meeting note: the UKRC Executive Committee voted unanimously to re-elect K Jones as UKCRC Chair]*

10.2 Committee roles [UKCRCEC/2022/16]

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of AOB.

Other consultations/Information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/unauthorised-access-to-online-accounts-and-personal-data> Unauthorised access to online accounts and personal data. A call for information on how we tackle offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

There will be a BEIS doc on this soon: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-63375260>
Competition regulator needs teeth to curb big tech, MPs say. They urge publication of a draft bill that could see firms fined 10% of turnover for market abuses.

[Governance of artificial intelligence \(AI\) - Committees - UK Parliament](#) The use of artificial intelligence (AI) has increased significantly in recent years. It offers a range of potential benefits such as quicker analysis of large datasets allowing more accurate inform...

UKRI review of perceptions of REF is here: <https://www.ukri.org/news/report-suggests-mixed-views-of-the-ref-among-researchers/> A major review of perceptions of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) has revealed mixed opinions that vary across career stage and disciplines.

Equality and diversity review of REF 2021 <https://www.ref.ac.uk/guidance-and-criteria-on-submissions/news/review-of-ref-equality-measures-published/> Review of REF equality measures published - REF 2021

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held online on Tuesday 7 March (11:00-13:00). Further dates are below.

AGM

Friday 2 December (14:00-15:00) – Online

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2023 commencing 11:00 unless otherwise stated

Tuesday 7 March – Online

*Monday 26 June 2023 – BCS London

Tuesday 24 October – Online

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

**to be co-located with CPHC Committee meeting. F2F/online format TBC*

UKCRC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN AT MEETINGS 2021-2

Outstanding Actions in Red

No.	Item	Item No.	Decision/Action	Responsibility	Complete
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 25 October 2022					
3	MATTERS ARISING Reports: RS Sectional Committee nominations	3	Arrange online meeting in January 2023 for RS0 nominations	M Leslie	On-going
	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	M Leslie/K Jones	On-going

7	REPORTS: International matters	7.2	Discuss possible attendance at IE ECSS, Edinburgh in October 2023 and liaise with Jane Hillston	Chair/Members	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 7 June 2022					
4	CHAIR'S REPORT		Send KJ names of anyone who may be able to contribute to visibility of UKCRC	Exec members	On-going
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	K Jones / Secretariat	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 26 October 2021					
3	MATTERS ARISING Reports: Membership Panel	7.1	Update membership process on website to make it clearer that applications must be supported by another member of the community	N Berthouze (passed to D De Roure)	On-going

(A) CPHC-UKCRC COLLABORATIVE WORKING (CPHC Committee members in attendance for the second part of this item: Rob Aspin, Atif Waraich, James Davenport, Nicky Danino, Paul Sant, Dhiya Al-Jumeily OBE, Austen Rainer, Keeley Crockett, Haris Mouratidis)

- **BCS Rewards & Recognition update [Sarah Foxall/Abi Edwards]** (see [BCS website](#))

S Foxall and A Edwards gave an overview of the work undertaken on the BCS Reward and Recognition Project to date. The Project is a multi-year effort to create a fully inclusive reward scheme that celebrates and recognises individuals and groups across all ages, experience, culture and professions who have advanced IT to make a positive difference for society. Establishing the new process will take a few months and the transition is being managed by a Task & Finish Group of the Academy of Computing Board. For Distinguished Dissertations, discussions were underway on whether this could dovetail with the Wilkes Award process.

- **Topics of common interest**

Members of the two Committees discussed support for teaching and research staff, in particular mentoring. K Crockett noted different types of mentoring in terms of research, career growth and planning. Research coaching needs mentee and mentor to be in the same area whilst mentoring for career development and personal growth is not discipline specific. Training is essential such as the ILM Level 5 coaching and mentoring diploma.

Formal structures are very useful but workloads are often a problem. IEEE has an established global system for members and this seems to work, perhaps this is something that CPHC (or BCS) could look into. A Rainer flagged a danger of fragmentation with many bodies looking to tackle the same issues. It is important that mentors/coaches are trained properly otherwise it could be more damaging than helpful. Mentoring needs to be at all levels, training provided and work allowance needs to be allocated. There is a difference between internal and external mentoring, the system of internal mentors can be well resourced but external mentoring is really helpful in terms of getting the point of view of other institutions, and it is this aspect that it would be helpful to get the help of the three bodies. K Crockett suggested that saying everything, including mentoring is put under the umbrella term "citizenship" does not provide an effective environment for mentoring. A better term may be peer support networks.

K Jones pointed out that mentoring is different for researchers with different career paths. N Danino also noted that mentoring for women is different. R Aspin suggested a focus on building networks at the CPHC Conference could help alongside mentoring. A Waraich described the LJMU process, where there is a difference between the research and induction mentors and work has been done on gender and ethnic diversity mentoring (eg, giving people confidence to step forward for promotion).

It may help to campaign for work loading arrangements to accommodate formal mentoring, which is a clear role of CPHC, which is also looking at culture and the environment within Departments. UKCRC and BCS are involved from different angles so it would be good to co-ordinate the efforts of all three. J Davenport flagged the existence of a BCS early careers group which has been piloting a buddy scheme, which was found to be valuable. A workload brokering scheme eg, mentor/mentee for mutual exchange system might be worth exploring.

It was agreed that the CPHC, UKCRC and BCS Academy Board Chairs should discuss this further in the context of each organisation and consider communications with CPHC members to seek volunteers to support collaborative activity.

ACTION: R Aspin/K Jones/(A Irons)