SCHOOL OF INFORMATICS

Research Committee

Wednesday 5th December 2018

Research Ethics & Data Management
Research Data Management
Research Ethics
Research Infrastructure / Procurement / Support

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Background – A number of current issues relating to data, ethics and infrastructure both internal and external to the School will have significant consequences for Research in the School. This paper aims to inform RC about some of the ongoing efforts in the School in these areas to inform an initial discussion at RC.

Action requested from the committee. I would like RC members to consult with colleagues on these issues and feedback comments either to dor@inf.ed.ac.uk or the specific contacts for each section (below), ideally before the next RC on Wednesday 9th January.

For Information:
DoR, dDoR and HoRS have recently completed a “tour” of Institutes to discuss research, identify emerging topics, give an opportunity to discuss issues and suggest ways in which we can be of assistance. Amongst the many themes to emerge were several focussed around the research environment (such as compute, procurement and support), research data management and data protection regulations. These themes cross several of the School’s committees and we need to co-ordinate their activities to produce coherent approaches to address them.

Research Data Management
Requirements for the management of research data are changing rapidly, especially for UKRI and UK-charity funded research with it highly likely that a shift to “open data” will become the normal expectation. This has potentially significant impact on the School and the University as a whole and is one of a number of related issues (such as Plan-S) being actively discussed by the University Research Steering Group with potential resource implications for the School. The recently enacted GDPR regulations place new obligations on us as researchers to evaluate the privacy implications of the research we are doing. The School will need to develop processes to ensure compliance and that our “Risk Register” for data is actively maintained and as accurate as possible. The School Research Data Management Team, dDoR, HoRS and Ethics Panel members are currently discussing what is required and will present their findings and recommendations to the appropriate School Committees over the coming months with the aim of establishing a coherent set of policies and procedures to satisfy legal and funder requirements. As part of this process both internal and external web-pages will be developed/updated and, whenever necessary, training sessions offered to enable research staff to adapt to the changes. RS/RDM Team – contacts Victoria.Lindstrom@ed.ac.uk, Janet.Ball@ed.ac.uk)

Research Infrastructure
The School has grown rapidly, and our existing setup is struggling to cope with increasing demands for compute (currently most acutely with provision of GPU), storage and computing support time. Our physical space is very close to capacity and without changes we will be unable to satisfy demand. The
Computer Strategy Committee (CSC) have instigated a “Compute & Data Strategy Group” (current membership; Kenneth Heafield, Iain Rae, Steve Renals, Alastair Scobie, Amos Storkey and Ian Simpson) to gather information, discuss possible solutions and make recommendations to CSC. These will help formulate a strategy to mitigate against the current problems and enable our research infrastructure to grow with the School. In addition to the physical infrastructure issues there are ongoing problems with procurement and commissioning of hardware, software installation and configuration and with computing support. CSC and CDSG - contact ian.simpson@ed.ac.uk (CSC co-chair)

**Research Ethics**
Discussions are ongoing between the Ethics Panel Convenor, HoRS, RDM Manager and dDoS to review the procedures for Ethics approval in the School. The diversification of research projects across the School with many using directly identifiable (or inferable) personal data means that we now need to establish more rigorous assessment and approval procedures. These are likely to need additional expert (likely external to the School) input. The group will meet regularly over the coming months to develop detailed proposals. Ethics Panel – contacts pseries@inf.ed.ac.uk, maria.wolters@ed.ac.uk

**Equality and diversity implications** – Not at this stage

**Resource implications (staff, space, budget)** – Not at this stage