



# OPTiMA

ARC TRAINING CENTRE IN  
OPTIMISATION TECHNOLOGIES  
INTEGRATED METHODOLOGIES  
AND APPLICATIONS

## MINUTES – OPTiMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FRI 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 10:00 – 12:00

LOCATION: ZOOM

Attendees: Kate Smith-Miles (Chair -KSM), Peter Stuckey (PS), Doreen Thomas (DT), Peter Taylor (PT), Andreas Ernst (AE), Rob Hyndman (RH), Charlotte Hurry (CH-Minutes). Shreya Arora (SA- Minutes)

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Apologies: Adrian Pearce (AP), Guido Tack (GT)

### MINUTED ITEMS

#### 1. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 1.1. UPDATE ON IAC -pending
- 1.2. SAC UPDATES -pending
- 1.3. TORONTO PARTNERSHIP – KSM -: deadline passed, and unfortunately, we couldn't make contact in time. We hope to explore this joint PhD opportunity next round with Chris Beck.

#### 2. CENTRE COMMENCEMENT

- 2.1. CH: The plan is for the Centre to commence on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September. We are currently in the signing stage of the partner agreements and several project agreements. We have four students starting immediately. One of those is on a full ARC stipend, so a timely commencement is significant for them.  
CH: The Centre has spent \$100,000 of the establishment funds and is now running over budget. However, yesterday the ARC changed its rules regarding the \$100,000 limit due to the difficulties faced with COVID. CH is asking for more funds to be made available.

KSM: Funds are currently used to pay for salaries, the website and advertising

- 2.2. KSM: the website has been running relatively slow; CH will email them again regarding this issue.

KSM did a podcast with ACEMs regarding OPTiMA and its commencement. The podcast interview will be released on the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month.

#### 3. RECRUITMENT/INDUSTRY UPDATE

Recruitment (Postdocs)

- 3.1. KSM: Our level A appointment has accepted her offer as Research Fellow level A; she recently submitted her PhD thesis to the University of Sydney and has her oral defence to complete. Her start date will be the 1<sup>st</sup> November. Her interview seminar went very well, and she has a background in aerospace, which may be helpful in the Boeing project. However, she will have the freedom to choose more projects and work in other areas. She is paid from the Math and Stats contribution, and we can access salary savings for relocation fees.

Our level B research fellow has accepted his contract. He will commence on OPTIMA funding from January next year, with KSM funding him until then.

PS: The candidate was selected for the level A Monash postdoc position; they will be appointed temporarily with Monash University funds and start on OPTIMA funding at the end of this year. They have previously worked with Melbourne Water on projects.

### 3.2. Scholarships

#### ARC Scholarships

CH: the FFT student has received the ARC scholarship, so they are awaiting the Centre commencement.

The MECCA, BOEING and SE WATER students have attracted their scholarships. KSM: The Melbourne Water student will probably use the ARC stipend. The AGL wind farm project has been assigned to a student in Montreal (he is currently going through university admissions). KSM will advise him to apply for the University scholarships first through the normal rounds. CH: this may pose an issue as they happen at fixed timings throughout the year. CH to follow up.

### 3.3. Industry Update

3.3.1. PS: South East Water offered a project to one applicant, but he has declined it. CH will follow up with GT regarding future interviews.

3.3.2. Woodside has pulled out from OPTIMA.

KSM: They didn't appreciate dealing with UoM as they have a long-standing relationship with Monash. KSM: it was unclear what was in it for them, as they already had a long-standing relationship with Monash.

PS: We need to have a better partnership management process.

PT: Highlighted that it is key to manage all the stakeholder engagement ourselves and suggested that CH be a part of managing stakeholder relations and progress. CIs should also be a part of this process with the partners they bring to the Centre.

KSM: In the future, all correspondence with a Monash partner will have cc to Mathura and PS.

CH asked to be in the stakeholder meetings to keep track and maintain the OPTIMA relationship.

CH will ask RIC to send legal information via Mathura, and she will cc Mathura in other correspondence. CH will ask CIs to include her in industry partner meetings.

#### 3.3.3. Payment Request Breakdown

3.3.3.1. KSM discussed OPTIMA industry contributions going forward. She suggested

-20k per annum for projects with the ARC scholarship

-50k per annum for a domestic student without the ARC or University scholarship (industry partner fully funding the student).

-25k per annum for students that can get their scholarships (industry funding the scholarship gap from university rate, i.e. Monash will need to ask for more than UoM).

PT: Suggested change to 20k base, plus whatever else it will cost to bring the student scholarship up to OPTIMA rate (acknowledging that some students might have international scholarships or other rates, so a more flexible rule is preferred). The Exec agreed.

#### 3.3.4. Potential New Projects

KSM is in talks with Melbourne water regarding a second project.

Hamideh has contacted Workforce analytics, and the company is considering the offer.

PS: has spoken with Wood on the possibility of becoming industry partners

PS: South East Water has agreed to a second project at the 50% discount with a UoM student who has a UoM scholarship, supervised by Prof. James Bailey (UoM) and PS (Monash). The project agreement is underway.

AGL also considering a second project at a 50% discount for existing industry partners.

KSM: DSTG – are interested and have problems identified but cannot currently provide funds.

#### 3.3.5. Working Onsite

KSM: ARC has a condition that requires students to work onsite or with the industry partners for a particular period (12 months) according to the contracts. CH will check if this is compulsory or an expectation and what impact COVID restrictions have.

### 4. ASSOCIATE INVESTIGATORS (AI)

4.1. KSM: suggested a quick brainstorm of the people that can be nominated for the role of AI. We need to create a list of names with their google scholar links and circulate it to everyone.

PT: AIs don't have to be working on optimisation as such. If they are interested and they can help with the projects, they should be considered.

Possible people:

PS: John Betts, Ariel Liebman

Tim Fletcher

PS: Hamid is co-supervising FFT

KSM: Gerardo Berbiglia

RH: Jessica Leung

DT: Marcus, Jason; DT will contact Jason from the engineering

KSM: Malin Premaratne from Monash engineering

Rob: Reza (on the website)

AE – Janosch Rieger

PT: Matthew Tam, Charl Ras

4.2. Automatically invite all the co-supervisors. CH to contact

4.3. AE: suggested looking at people from other institutes: they should self-nominate; The Exec can decide at each meeting.

People from other institutes:

DT: Chris

Toby Walsh

Marcus Gallagher

CH to contact the people on the seminar emailing list to invite them to nominate.

KSM: We need to invite all of the people listed today; The Exec will talk to their contacts and email CH.

DT will contact Engineering, KSM will ask the Maths and Stats people, AE will ask Janosch.

### 5. STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

5.1. CH: Location may be online or in-person (not confirmed yet). The dates will be decided once all the replies to the poll are in.

KSM: If online, it would be better in 2 sessions

CH: The cost of the in-person option will be between 3.5k to 5k

5.2. CH: An estimated 40 people include CI, PI, and students, as not everyone will be coming. CH will send a registration form once we're sure of the dates.

#### 5.3. Agenda

CH showed the draft agenda.

CH: is unsure whether to add an intro to OPTIMA because many people have seen the introduction seminar.

KSM: rephrase how not to create silos to Towards Integration (what defines our silo, discipline, and language differences in different fields).

5 min intro slots for CI is a good idea, but to ensure people stick to time, it was decided that each CI would submit one slide to CH, and CH will compile the slides (October).

Milestones Discussion –

CH shared the draft strategic plan. At the meeting, we should discuss the following: are we still wanting to achieve everything we've got in the proposal, what is the pathway to achieving these things, who is responsible for keeping them in check and the timeframe? – a column with intended outcomes – identify the industry projects linked with that milestone. Plans to unify and have meetings between projects that fall under the same milestone.

CH will send through the strategic plan document before the meeting.

KSM: Think about possible other options to make it interactive or less draining than sitting on a zoom call all day: maybe an audio session so people can take a walk and listen? – CH will brainstorm possible ideas for this.

## 6. INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT (SI\*)

- 6.1. KSM: We need more partners – so more CIs can have a role in projects.  
Possibly a conversation for next year – CH to add to January agenda.

## 7. SAC TOR

- 7.1. CH showed the changes to the document. The Exec agreed.

## 8. OUTREACH COMMITTEE TOR

CH shared the document.

KSM, what is the scope of the committee?

PT: National Science week may be something that the outreach committee can plan on every year.

KSM: We need to limit the scope of this; what do we want it to be focused on – reaching out to high school kids to promote the practical use of math and computing, or about promoting the success stories to engage students and industries; or is it podcasts. We don't need to overlap with what our departments are doing with high school outreach.

DT: suggests it would be better not to have it for the kids but instead focused on industry to increase awareness.

All agreed to remove marketing from the responsibilities and replace it with Communications; CH to make this change. Knowing and following the industry marketing protocol seemed too much work for the committee. Change phrasing to ensure that the Centre Manager or the Exec approves all communication decisions to ensure compliance.

KSM: Item 5 – CH change as their job is to develop ideas to recommend the Exec.

CH to present the revised version of the document in the next meeting.

## 9. CENTRE INDUCTION

CH shared the induction document. The first 12 pages are what Kate and Peter talk about in the video. CH to change video links on the website.

It mentions the Centre resources, publication requirements, policies and reporting process. Additions to this document. KSM: mention information about the shared desks at the Monash and UoM campus. Their desk locations, technology provided (computers and apps). Incorporate a link to each university's induction pages and the basic amenities provided by the universities.

PS: The computers and the software will be provided by the university to them. OPTIMA does not need to worry about this, but we should make sure it is clear to staff and students.

KSM- add the requirement for PhD to spend some time with the industry partners  
 CH to make the changes and arrange the induction sessions.

10. AOB - none

The meeting concluded at 12:01

## ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1	<u>Terms</u> of reference	-develop terms of reference and policies for the sub-committees	CH		
		Education and Training	CH	01 Oct 2021	Pending
		Budget Plan	CH	01 Oct 2021	Pending
		Governance Plan	CH	05 Nov 2021	Pending
		Data Management Plan	CH	05 Nov 2021	Pending
		Outreach – make updates as per the above and present in the next meeting.	CH	01 Oct 2021	Pending
2	Scientific advisory committee membership	Membership– Contact Leonie Walsh; Michael Grogan or Katie O'Connell; Francis or Roma Sharp; Bronwyn Fox or Simon; Heather St. John; Heather's equivalent at Monash	KSM	03 Sept 2021	Pending
3	PhD students	Ask current applicants to apply for uni stipends	CH	ASAP	Completed
		Follow up with GT student	CH	ASAP	Completed
4	Industry committee membership	Membership - Contact Natasha, Alexandra and Chris, Martin.	KSM	03 Sept 2021	Pending
5	Industry partners	An email regarding industry partner engagement	CH	asap	Pending
		Set up a meeting with ARC ITTCS to discuss collaboration	CH	December	Pending
		Speak to the Bureau of Meteorology regarding optimisation problems.	PT	December	Pending
		12-month industry placement – follow up on requirements	CH	asap	Pending

6	Website	Contact re running slow.	CH	ASAP	Completed
		Change links for the induction video.	CH	ASAP	Pending
7	Strategic planning meeting	Book dates, update the program, send the registration link and send the strategic plan document. Ask CIs for their contribution. Plan for an online event.	CH	01 Oct 2021	Pending
8	Als	Email list of seminar people, share the nomination link, send the Exec the final list.	CH	01 Oct 2021	Pending
		Contact the suggested Als, item 4 of the agenda.	The Exec	01 Oct 2021	Pending
9	Add to future meetings	Financial incentives for associate investigators	CH	04 Feb 2022	Pending
		Call out for committee membership	CH	03 Dec 2021	Pending
		Brainstorming adding new partners	CH	04 Feb 2022	Pending

\*Standing Item