



OPTiMA

ARC TRAINING CENTRE IN
OPTIMISATION TECHNOLOGIES
INTEGRATED METHODOLOGIES
AND APPLICATIONS

MINUTES – OPTiMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FRI 1 APRIL 10:00 – 12:00

LOCATION: ZOOM

Attendees: Kate Smith-Miles (Chair -KSM), Peter Stuckey (PS), Andreas Ernst (AE), Guido Tack (GT), Charlotte Hurry (CH-minutes), Shreya Arora (SA-minutes)

Apologies: Doreen Thomas (DT), Rob Hyndman (RH), Adrian Pearce (AP), Peter Taylor (PT)

MINUTED ITEMS

1. Actions from previous meetings
 - a. Centre launch – No response from the Vice-Chancellor yet. The date has been set as 16th November 2022.
CH: An invite list should be collaboratively created and include people from industries. All VIPs have to be invited by the VC office.
CH to ask CIs to contribute to the invite list
 - b. SAC – Jose Fernando Oliveira – editor in chief of the European Journal of Operation Research. Kate would like to ask him to join the SAC.
KSM: They have an excellent optimisation team so they would be good in SAC.
2. STRATEGIC PLAN
CH: The table of contents will be edited, and the text justification will also be examined.
All Exec to proof-read
KSM&PS: Industry partner projects boxes need to be updated. **CH** to update.
 - Include a footnote that refers to the research outcomes for further information.
 - The table should include each sub-section of the research outcomes (1.1, 1.2, 1.3). Also, confirm the boxes' positions.
 - The boxes should be coloured black and white.**CH** to remove the "final and endorsed" on the file names in the governance section. Add in a hyperlink for each of those files.
3. ARC STIPEND VARIATION REQUEST
CH: Monash doesn't want to give up their ARC scholarship (for stipend top-ups) unless we show them our budget. They think we may be able to source the money from elsewhere.
KSM: We are in this situation because we are lucky that more students than expected could attract their university scholarships, but we now have to pay for the stipend gaps while we sit on ARC scholarships that aren't filled.
PS: They do not want any less money coming to Monash.

CH shows the budget in item 4 to explain why we have no surplus cash on these top-ups. Monash has not yet found replacements for the two projects at Woodside, one at AusNet, and one at CSR, with an \$80,000 deficit due to a lack of PO funds in year one. CH: We can back off from pushing Monash for the ARC scholarship until the forecasts are completed – see item 4.

KSM: We can wait for a while, but if we don't see any new industry partners signing on, we will have to start pushing to use one of the Monash allocated ARC scholarships to fund the gaps for all students.

The Exec agrees that we give Monash a couple more months to secure new POs before discussing the ARC stipend again.

4. BUDGET FORECASTING

CH showed the updated budget, which has been updated for indexation, PO contributions and the extra line item agreed to in the last Exec meeting (Postdoc conference fund). Also added were the establishment funds spent in year zero. Currently, the budget shows a year one deficit of ~127,536, which is ~\$547,367 over five years.

However, that budget does not reflect the amount we need to spend when we add the strategic initiatives agreed to in the Strategic Plan (SP). CH has created a forecast budget with the addition of the SP.

CH went through the line items proposed.

New additions to the budget:

- 0.6 FTE HEW 4.1-4.4 for two years included administration support.
The Exec agrees as we would need more support if we are growing.
- The additional top-ups to bring the student to ARC stipend rates. **The Exec agrees**, but we will still ask Monash for the ARC scholarship if they can't bring on new industry partners in the next two months.
- Additional money for exchange programs. **The Exec agrees.**
- AMSI is discontinuing its optimisation event due to financing issues. KSM: We could collaborate with AMSI and share the finances to do the conference. So we take proposal funding for AMSI Optimise attendance and use it towards an OPTIMA optimise conference. **The Exec agrees.**
- Centre running costs have been added for year 0. **The Exec agrees.**
- Centre running costs for years 1 – 5 have been kept the same as proposed.
However, several of the new initiatives may come from that line item, including:
 - Female recruitment drive
 - Climate survey
 - Equity scholarships
 - Other Briefings - travel costs * 10
 - Adelaide for cross-centre activities
 - Hosting visitors
 - Develop a software package

The Exec agrees.

It was decided not to have a line item for "developing a software – Optimisation toolkit" should be \$0 since it is a part of Jason's role. **The Exec agrees.**

- **CH** to change the "hosting guests" to \$0 for the first few years, but we can add it to later years when we have more money. PS suggested looking for other university opportunities to host these guests for now. **The Exec agrees.**
- CH: Open access publishing incurs a cost required by the ARC. **The Exec agrees** to remove it from the budget because we do not encourage it. **CH** to action.
- **GT** to check the budget for Summer School and provide a general idea of the summer school. **CH** to update: Preliminary budget for the summer school at Monash was around \$30k, with half of that covered by registration fees. **The Exec agrees** to fund a summer school.
- Microcert has funding available in UniMelb through MSPACE so that we can cover some figures. **CH** to contact UniMelb and get an idea of how much can be provided. This figure will be added as a line item. **The Exec agrees.**
- Costs for the optimisation toolkit tutorials-> PS: The optimisation toolkit should not need a lot of extra budgets because we are likely to be already attending the conference, so the trip's funding would already be funded from elsewhere. KSM: we should include some funding as promoting the toolkit to a broader range of communities will involve travelling to more conferences than we usually do. **The Exec agrees.**
- Research Support scheme - **The Exec agrees.**
- AI SUPPORT- **The Exec agrees.**
- **CH** to update the budget and forecasts.

PS: On Tuesday, all the CIs and BD teams will meet in Monash to brainstorm possible industry partners.

KSM: We should also include Fiona Broussard (Monash IT BD team) in the Tuesday meeting to get more projects from the industry. **AE** to invite Fiona.

CH has created a third forecast that includes all the Strategic Initiatives and the addition of all 12 POs at Monash. It shows that we will break even. CH: if we secure all the expected stipends from the industry partners for the next few years. KSM & CH: It would be good to have the extra money in the budget to cover additional initiatives and top-ups.

5. PO CONTRIBUTIONS FOR INCOMING PARTNERS

KSM: AusNet has withdrawn.

PS: Ariel is talking to many energy companies who are coming up with optimisation problems to get more partners signed on with OPTIMA.

PS: CSL is signing a big research contract with Monash; the BD team wants to get that done before pushing for the OPTIMA project.

PS: Emely has slow progress but is doing good work. Zahra is very slow and doesn't seem to have the capability for this project. I may have to prepare Mecca for changing the PhD student. She will not be confirmed, but she would still have to complete the 1.5 years.

KSM: In this scenario, we lose the top-up; we need to source the new top-up funds if we have a new student start.

GT: SEW project will start around mid-July. There are delays for the student visa, but we constantly talk with SEW.

KSM: AGL, Boeing, and MW are going well.

PS will connect with Vincent to check how the SEW project is going.

KSM: Probe group and ABS are progressing well. ABS student (Harry McArthur) has applied for a UoM scholarship.

PS: Waiting to hear from AFP and Woodside.

KSM to chase up Lifeblood and DSTG

KSM to talk to Simon Bowly about Gurobi's involvement in OPTIMA.

6. STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

CH can take control of this since it is a long-term project.

CH: We could build an expression of interest for the students and see how many are interested. The exchange program should be aligned with their PhD, and the student should have completed the year one milestone of their PhD. This would also have to be approved by the supervisors. The students will be asked to write a short application, and a supervisor needs to sign off.

The Exec agrees.

CH (or SA) could identify a list of the optimisation projects and academics in those areas and distribute it to the students here.

KSM: We may have some IP issues with our international partners being involved in our projects when they are not part of the legal contract, but we can deal with that later.

7. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Lusheng Shao applied to be an AI and gave a good seminar. He had very positive feedback from Tansu, but there isn't a project available now. Tansu would like OPTIMA to find a project for them to collaborate on.

KSM&PS: It is okay to have him as an AI as long as they collaborate. CH to contact Lusheng to tell him we need a collaboration first.

8. YEAR ZERO REPORTING

CH reported results from Year zero membership. Including gender distribution, citizenships (showing diversity), Centre membership distribution (number of students in each category), ECRs in optima, and the supervisions in OPTIMA.

- Some CIs don't have a lot of students allocated under them; this should be changed to have students distributed more evenly. CH to contact CIs without students.

9. Update from Themes (SI*)
10. Update from Sub-committees (SI*)
11. AOB

Meeting ended at 11:35 AM.

ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1	Terms of reference	develop terms of reference and policies for the sub-committees	CH		
		Education and Training Plan	E&T Comm	23 March 22	completed
		Budget Plan	CH	23 March 22	overdue
		Governance Plan	CH	23 March 22	completed
		Data Management Plan	CH	23 March 22	completed
		Outreach Plan	Out Comm	23 March 22	completed
2	Scientific advisory committee membership	Plan for 1st meeting in March 2022. 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	1 Apr 22	overdue
3	Optimisation Training Centres and CoEs	Compile a list	CH/KSM	1 Apr 22	overdue
4	Industry committee membership	Plan for 1st meeting in March 2022. Membership. Membership - Contact Natashia, Alexandra and Chris Martin.	KSM	1 Apr 22	overdue
5	Industry partners	CSL – follow up with Monash	CH/Aldeida	asap	Pending
		Set up a meeting with ARC ITTCS to discuss collaboration	CH	1 May 22	Pending
		Speak to the Bureau of Meteorology regarding optimisation problems.	PT	1 May 22	Pending
		Chase up Lifeblood and DSTG	KSM	1 May 22	Pending
		Talk to Simon about involvement in OPTIMA	KSM	1 May 22	Pending
		ARC -arrange a meeting to discuss industry joining options.	CH	04 May 22	Pending
		Rockwell	AP	04 May 22	Pending
6	Strategic Plan	Final read through	All Exec	ASAP	Pending
7	Annual Report	Count these 'internal' arrangements as OPTIMA projects. Add a section in the Annual Report	CH	04 May 2022	Pending

8	Postdoc travel funds	Create line item	CH	ASAP	completed
9	Als	Contact Chris Manzie	DT	04 Apr 22	overdue
		Contact Lushen	CH	ASAP	Pending
10	Add to future meetings	Financial incentives for associate investigators	CH	04 May 22	completed
		Level A postdoc discuss	CH	06 Jun 22	Pending
		CSIRO NextGen Graduate Program	CH	1 Jun 22	Pending
11	Centre launch	Start planning, and ask CIs to contribute to the invite list.	CH	1 Apr 22	In progress
12	ARC stipend split	Contact Mathura	CH	ASAP	completed
13	AI Induction	Add further info	CH	04 May 22	pending
14	Y3 forms for POs	Create and set date	CH	1 Oct 22	Pending
15	SE Water	Follow up with Vincent	PS	ASAP	Pending
16	Student Exchange	Create EOI	CH	1 May 22	Pending