ISIS User Committee

Friday 7 June 2024, 10:00 – 13.00
Online via Zoom

Minutes

Attendance

User group	IUC member	Institution	Attendance
IUG1 Crystallography	Matthew Cliffe	University of Nottingham	In attendance
	Karen Johnston	University of Durham	In attendance
IUG2 Disordered Materials	Gosia Swadzba-Kwasny	Queens University Belfast	In attendance
	Helen Fraser	The Open University	In attendance
IUG4 Excitations	David Boldrin	University of Glasgow	In attendance
	Chris Stock	University Edinburgh	Apologies
IUG5 Molecular Spectroscopy	Matthew Potter	University of Bath	In attendance
	Maria Paula Marques	University of Coimbra	In attendance
IUG6 Muons	Joseph Wright	University of East Anglia	In attendance
	Ravi Singh	Indian Institute of Scientific Education and Research, Bhopal	In attendance
IUG7 Engineering	Richard Moat	The Open University	Apologies
	Mahmoud Mostafavi	University of Bristol	Apologies
IUG8 Small Angle Scattering	Wuge Briscoe (Chair)	University of Bristol	In attendance
	Alex Routh	University of Cambridge	In attendance
IUG9 Reflectometry	Richard Campbell	University of Manchester	In attendance
	Tom Arnold	ESS	In attendance
IUG10 Chip Irradiation	Matteo Cecchetto	CERN	Apologies
IUG11 Cultural Heritage	Francesco Grazzi	CNR	In attendance

ISIS Representatives present

Roger Eccleston	ISIS Director
Steve Wakefield	Head of ISIS Operations & Deputy Director
Philip King	ISIS Associate Director for Partnerships & Programmes
Sean Langridge	ISIS Associate Director for Science
Marek Jura	ISIS Experimental Operations Division Head
Sonia Conway	representing ISIS Computing Division
Emma Gozzard	ISIS User Programme Manager
Sarah Rogers	ISIS Science Division Head

Apologies

Hannah Griffin	ISIS Computing Division Head

1. Welcome and introductions

The attendees were welcomed by the Chair and introduced themselves.

2. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes from the meeting of 12 December 2023 were approved.

Actions from the meeting of 12 December 2023 with status comments:

Action	Responsible	Meeting action added	Last update (Dec 2023)	New update
Consider relaunching user twinning scheme (including data analysis)	Philip / Emma	Dec 2020	Remove	Twinning is part of the NEPHEWS EU project that ISIS is part of. We will look to relaunch the ISIS scheme as we start the EU activity in the second part of 2024. Remove from action list.
Promote IUC and generic email address through post cards / posters in cabins, etc.	Emma	June 2023	Ongoing	In discussion with Comms & Impact team, to include with other information.
Experimental reports – revised form and process	Philip	Dec 2022	Ongoing	Philip to finalise the objectives of experimental reports. Emma raised issue of sending experiment stats and report request email on the last day of the experiment with relevant software team – not likely to be completed this year. Experiment report status to be included in new user dashboard project.
Online form for notifying ISIS of publications and PhD theses	Emma	Dec 2022	Remove	To be included in new website. Remove from action list.
DOI for multiple datasets / raw and reduced data	Hannah	Dec 2022	Remove	This will be work within the New Data project. Remove from action list.
IDAaaS information on the ISIS website and provision of computing information in general	Hannah	Dec 2022 and raised again June 2023	Ongoing	User area to be updated.
Videos on data analysis	Hannah	Dec 2022	Ongoing	Action with the Scientific Support team to make existing videos available on the website and create further content (SC)
Video on Data Gateway	Hannah	Dec 2022	Ongoing	Feedback from the Scientific Software team requested for the next meeting (new action)
Is per-diem sufficient	Emma	June 2023	Done	No plans to make changes at the moment. Average spend is roughly matching what we put onto cards.
Ease of access to RCaH	Emma	June 2023	Ongoing	Some management changes at RCaH and lack of need has delayed this.
Ridgeway extension: ISIS to solicit user stories of how this affects experiments to make the business case and to work with Diamond on this. IUC members to send any examples to Philip.	Emma All IUC members	Dec 2023	Done.	Done. There are no plans at present for Ridgeway to be extended.
Italian experiment support amount to be raised with Carla Andreani	Philip	Dec 2023	Done.	Done. Agreed to increase the amount from £750 to £850.
Use of user cards in Ridgeway House vending machines	Emma	Dec 2023		Raised with STFC Soft Facilities and BaxterStorey – options being explored
ISIS to promote the ISIS Sustainability Network (ISN) in a future communication to the user community	Emma	Dec 2023	Done.	Not yet sent, but ISN team are aware.
Marek to check shipping instructions for users needing to buy chemicals for ISIS experiments	Marek	Dec 2023	Done.	Done. The Shipping Instructions webpage has been updated to include advice on checking with the Lab Group on available stocks and to consider arranging delivery of chemicals to ISIS direct from suppliers.

Policy on use of AI tools: experimental reports to be added; a note on figures to be added	Philip	Dec 2023	Done.	Done. Policy now 'live'.
Online safety test material to be available as a pdf	Marek	Dec 2023	Done	Done. Printed copies of the User Training Material are now available in the TS1 and TS2 entrance foyers.
Specific example of long experiment delay to be given to Philip if possible	Matthew / Karen (IUG1)	Dec 2023	Done	Done. Discussed by email with Matt/Karen.
Proposal system wording around sample provision to be checked	Emma	Dec 2023	Done	Done.
Gather evidence of Ridgeway costs prohibiting overseas user coming to ISIS	IUG5 Alex / Philip	Dec 2023		Benchmarking against other facilities requested (new action)
What is included in data files when data is made public to be clarified	Hannah	Dec 2023	Done.	Example DOI: https://data.isis.stfc.ac.uk/doi/STUDY/110643111/. Awaiting confirmation on anything embedded in the data files but believe it's just PI/CoI Surnames (SC)
Ridgeway invoices for overseas users to be checked for accuracy and clarity	Emma	Dec 2023	Done.	Done. Raised with BaxterStorey
Labelling of food for allergens in R22 – strong need for this	Emma	Dec 2023	Done	Done. Labelling not possible, but there are two members of staff, at each service, advertised by photo and name available to discuss options
Ridgeway check-in time to be checked	Emma	Dec 2023	Done.	Done. Discussed and no changes to check-in and check-out time, but Ridgeway encourage to be flexible if rooms are ready
Greater explanation of what is required in proposals for archaeometry users	Emma	Dec 2023	Done.	Done. Discussed with ISIS science staff
Transport costs for dangerous samples – can this be part of the consumables budget?	Marek	Dec 2023	Done.	Done. A sample shipping project code has been set up and is in use, to track the costs of sample shipping. We will review these costs after 3 cycles to assess what the budgetary implications would be.

3. ISIS update

ISIS Director Roger Eccleston gave an update on various matters:

- Financial pressures within STFC/UKRI will lead to challenges over the next couple of years. ISIS is looking at how best to manage the situation – there is support from STFC for ISIS to run all cycles this year, and this is the intent at present.

- ISIS now operational on all moderators across both target stations following the TS1 refurbishment, and the effects of moderator changes have been assessed. H-moderator has been changed on TS2 leading to flux increases. There have been beam availability challenges related to both the TS1 moderators and the accelerator; ISIS aims to achieve 90% availability and there are ongoing plans to help us achieve this.

- Instrument developments: SXD detector replacement has led to a factor 4 increase in count rate; upgrade of Surf has led to a flux gains; and Inter has seen a factor 4 gain in flux.

- ISIS-II: ISIS is progressing science and business cases with the aim of further feasibility funding. Item later regarding user engagement.

- Endeavour: two projects (SuperMuSR and HRPD-x) are progressing with others soon to move into implementation.

- Endeavour+: ISIS is looking to scope out the next phase of instrument developments beyond Endeavour, and will be producing a prospectus of possible projects for partners to contribute to.

- This is ISIS's 40th year of operations. There is a set of science roadshow events through the country – Belfast and Cardiff have taken place and there are three more upcoming.

- Neutron review: Primary focus of this is to ensure that UK researchers have access to the capabilities they need particularly following end of operation of ILL (most likely 2033). STFC need information from the community on the impact of ILL closure. The review will update that performed in 2020. A questionnaire has been issued to the community; we would encourage all to complete this.

There was further discussion regarding the financial pressures. There was also discussion regarding representation of ISIS impact to other parts of STFC and UKRI. **Action: to produce a short paper on this, and how users can be involved in this, for the next IUC meeting.**

4. User dashboard project

Sonia Conway introduced the user dashboard project. The project will provide a user portal / hub so that user proposals, reports, etc can be viewed in one place, and the status of proposals and experiments can be seen in an easy view – i.e. moving from a process view to a more user view. This project is currently in concept phase and will be moved to a feasibility phase shortly, with the aim of delivering a new system over the next two years.

There was discussion regarding the idea, and whether ISIS will create the new system in collaboration with other facilities who already have such user portals. It was noted that this idea will be explored as part of the feasibility phase of the project.

5. ISIS-II science case development

Sarah Rogers outlined the proposed development of the ISIS-II science case. Following a user webinar earlier this year to provide basic details of the ISIS-II project that was attended by around 300 community members, the proposed next steps are focus groups to develop key science themes followed by a larger town meeting coinciding with the UK Neutron and Muon Science and User Meeting in Warwick in March 2025.

There was discussion regarding what should be included in briefing documents prior to the proposed meetings to enable the meetings to be most effective in providing the unique capabilities anticipated from a new source. There was discussion on the involvement of the ISIS Science Advisory Committee in the process.

Action: Update webpage on how the science community can get involved in the ISIS-II process (Sarah)

Action: All to respond to Emma with further thoughts on the ISIS-II process and to volunteer to be part of this.

6. Feedback from user groups

Detailed technical comments from user feedback are fed directly to instrument scientists and technical groups.

Crystallography

- Very positive on ISIS staff support – SE, science, UO.

- Lack of staff to fully support data analysis or SE support at times was noted.

- Beam stability issues were noted; one user having a particularly unfortunate experience with multiple experiments being cancelled. **Action: this to be followed up by Emma**.

- Training videos for software was raised again (ongoing action). Support for other software (Topaz academic) was also requested. Total scattering data remains challenging to process.

- Comments on vending machine stocking were noted. **Action: Emma to raise these with the site team.**

Disordered Materials

- Positive support by technical and science teams noted.

- Beam stability issues were commented on.

- Reuse of data, and availability of data on simple, common systems to avoid repeat of this, was discussed.

Excitations

- Only a few user feedback responses; largely positive regarding scientific and technical support.
- Lower scores were due to beam stability and one or two software issues.

Molecular Spectroscopy

- Noted that users from overseas rated ISIS as 5, UK users sometimes gave lower scores. Many positive comments on science, technical and user office support were noted.
- Beam reliability also noted, and how lost time is compensated for.
- The cost of Ridgeway was noted again. Whether users with particular experimental needs (e.g. many sample changes) could be prioritised for Ridgeway was also discussed; whilst this is very desirable, it is not always possible to ensure this.
- No. people supported for an experiment was discussed and whether this should revert back to 3. **Action: Emma and Philip to discuss.**
- RCaH access difficulties were also noted again – both bureaucratic access to the building as well as support for use of the kit. **Marek and Emma to raise with RCaH senior staff.**

Muons

- Beamline stability has been an issue for muon instruments.
- There was no proposal call for muons this round due to a large backlog.
- Software for muon analysis and the issue of whether Mantid or Wimda are now being used and supported was raised.
- Cryogenic support at weekends was briefly discussed.

Engineering

- No engineering rep present, but user feedback comments were noted.
- The issue of beam intensity not being at its pre-shutdown levels was raised; beam loss issues have occurred following shutdown work, and investigations are ongoing to identify the cause of the problem.
- Could dosimetry results be sent to users? **Action: Steve W to look into this.**
- The lack of bus transport to site on Sundays was noted and discussed (this is particularly key for overseas users who have to pay for the taxis).

SANS

- Comments were very complementary about beamline scientists.
- Time from proposal to experiment raised as long in some cases.
- A variety of other feedback issues were noted.

Reflectometry

- General comments from the user community, but noting issues raised around beam stability. Issues around IBEX stability and Mantid performance were noted.
- There continues to be an issue around location of surface characterisation equipment in the bioloab, but there is a project underway to relocate the kit.
- Step for access to Langmuir trough and sharp edges in the Inter blockhouse were noted (**Action: Marek to investigate**).

There was brief discussion around user training provision.

ChipIr

- No user rep present, but the comments from the feedback form were discussed, including site access for users, user welcoming, consistency of processes – **Action: Emma to raise this with RAL Security again.**

Archaeometry

- The number of proposals continues to increase in the archaeometry area.

- Nuclear resonance transmission imaging is now available – consideration needed on how to develop this further.

- Discussion of user comments: noise in images and tomograms; comments regarding user office processes – **Action: Emma to pursue specific case.**

Food choice at weekends was raised again. **Action: Emma to continue to pursue.**

9. AoB, Date of next meeting

Conference for ISIS-supported students – very well attended last year, but less so this year. Support for the meeting is good, but the timing needs to be looked at to try to avoid clashes with other things. **Action: to be discussed with meeting organisers, Helen offered to be involved.**

Date of the next meeting: 6th December 2024.

General preference for in-person meetings rather than online when finances allow this.

Actions from the meeting

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Promote IUC and generic email address through post cards / posters in cabins, etc.	Emma	June 2023	Ongoing	In discussion with Comms & Impact team, to include with other information.
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Videos on data analysis	Hannah	Dec 2022	Ongoing	Action with the Scientific Support team to make existing videos available on the website and create further content (SC)
Video on Data Gateway	Hannah	Dec 2022	Ongoing	
Ease of access to RCaH	Marek / Emma	June 2023	Ongoing	
Feedback from Scientific Software team on user training, videos, etc.	Hannah / Sonia	June 2024	New	

Benchmark Ridgeway costs for external users against accommodation costs at other facilities	Emma	June 2024	New	
Paper on demonstration of ISIS impact within STFC/ UKRI for next IUC meeting	Philip	June 2024	New	
Update ISIS-II webpage on community consultation process	Sarah	June 2024	New	
Comments on ISIS-II community consultation welcome	All IUC members	June 2024	New	
User suffering multiple experiment cancellations to be followed up	Emma	June 2024	New	
Vending machine stocking issues to be raised	Emma	June 2024	New	
No. supported users coming to experiments to be discussed	Emma / Philip	June 2024	New	
Could dosimetry results be sent to users?	Steve W	June 2024	New	
Step access to Langmuir trough and sharp edges in Inter blockhouse to be investigated	Marek	June 2024	New	
User site access, user 'welcome', processing of visitors, consistency of processes to be raised	Emma	June 2024	New	
Specific case of communication of Ridgeway availability (archaeometry user) to be investigated	Emma	June 2024	New	
Food choice at weekends not good – to be raised again	Emma	June 2024	New	
Student meeting timing to be discussed	Philip / Helen	June 2024	New	