Summary of the changes in the Digital Masterplan Summer 17 update

Introduction

Digital technology is essential for world leading research and forms a key ingredient of a modern learning environment. Our digitally enabled students expect technology to be used effectively to support their learning. Technology can also be an engine of efficiency, helping to deliver improved financial outcomes. Effective digital infrastructure will also underpin our ability to deliver against UCL 2034.

The Digital Masterplan was developed to achieve these goals and implementation began in 2016 and the plan has just been updated in summer 2017.

This document summarises the key changes and the full Digital Masterplan in the Summer 17 update.

Digital Masterplan Summer 17 update

Our vision

The vision remains for:

*Every member of UCL to have a digital experience that meets their needs simply and efficiently, enabling UCL's research, learning and teaching activities to flourish and be world leading in a rapidly evolving digital world.*

To realise this vision six interrelated objectives have been developed and these remain consistent with the original Digital Masterplan:

- **Objective 1:** Provide a world leading student digital experience to enable education to flourish.
- **Objective 2:** Provide world-leading research IT capabilities to enable UCL’s researchers to find new answers to the hardest questions.
- **Objective 3:** Provide the universe of UCL knowledge and functionality seamlessly to students and staff through a transformed Digital Experience
- **Objective 4:** Manage our activities through functionally rich and easy to use administrative processes and rich management information.
- **Objective 5:** Provide a strong, stable and sustainable base through transformed IT infrastructure.
- **Objective 6:** Deliver a high-performance and customer centric culture with efficient processes and effective services.

The key changes to the Masterplan for each of these objectives are summarised in the sections below:

**Objective 1: Provide a world leading student digital experience**

Good progress has been made improving the basics with over £2.5m invested in improved teaching space technology including AV and Lecturecast during the first 18 months of the masterplan but with over 500 teaching spaces across campus there is still work to do.
Space has also been found for an extra 600 student computers over summer which will help to address a key concern for students but still UCL will be about 700 student computers away from the Russell Group average for an institution of our size.

Following a recent upgrade to Lecturecast, we have seen usage increase over three fold in the first weeks of the 17/18 academic year which helps to address another key concern for students.

The new space availability technology will provide students with a much-needed way to find available student study spaces through an easy to use mobile application.

Looking forward, a new integrated student service centre will be developed as part of the new Student Centre building. This will bring together the range of student services into a single easy to access and comprehensive physical and online presence.

A new ‘student success platform’ will be developed to provide personal tutors with access to the data needed to effectively support their tutees

**Objective 2: Provide world-leading research IT capabilities**

Major investments in High Performance Computing including the recent EPSRC funded collaborative materials research facility, have provided UCL with the most powerful HPC facility of any UK university.

Our UK leading research software development group continues to be developed and recently we’ve introduce a new resourcing model that allows the group to scale in line with a risk adjusted forecast of future grant funding. This avoids the recruitment time lag that occurs if resourcing is based on actual grant funding.

The next phase of the PAGS system has been released which adds post award functionality to the existing grant costing and associated pre-award functionality.

Going forwards we’re seeking to position UCL as the partner of choice for large collaborative research IT initiatives since there is considerable advantage in being the ‘hosting’ partner for such endeavours.

Over time PAGS will become UCL’s comprehensive research life-cycle management application. The next stage will be the addition of modules to handle opportunity and contract management.

**Objective 3: Transform the Digital Experience of UCL’s staff and students**

The implementation of the new Drupal content management system is progressing well and the first tranche of websites have been migrated over to the new platform. These include the student recruitment site, Brain Sciences and The Bartlett.

Looking forward a key focus will be a new digital skin, known as UCL Connect, which will provide a unified and easy to use Amazon-like interface for the administrative tasks our staff and students undertake on a day to day basis. No longer will staff and students need to use the sometimes clunky and varied interfaces of our underlying core systems, such as Finance, HR and Estates. This will be a key enabler for TOPS.

Alongside this we’ll complete the migration of UCL’s over 1,000 websites to the new Drupal platform and revitalise and refresh UCL’s student and staff mobile platform known as UCL Go

It will be important to improve how we market our range of programmes, both degree based and those linked to Life Learning using digital channels through an integrated and high-quality web presence that overcomes the somewhat fragmented current offering.

**Objective 4: Easy to use administrative processes and rich management information.**

The upgrade to MyFinance was recently delivered and this places it on the latest platform in readiness for the new MyHR system.

Over the last year a review and simplification of the academic model has been completed in readiness for the recently started project to transform Portico.
Recently the initial release of the new data & insight platform went live with admissions data. Soon this will be augmented with grant data from PAGS. The new service is underpinned by UCL’s first integrated data-warehouse and Tableau, the industry leading data visualisation tool.

Looking forward to the next year we’ll see the completion of the new MyHR system although this is dependent on any changes resulting from TOPS.

The project to transform Portico aims to cast off the baggage of the past and provide the university with an excellent student administration system that meets the needs of today and tomorrow.

Over the remaining Masterplan implementation period, the data & insight service will be developed to provide a true enterprise-wide near real-time management information facility that joins up data from a wide range of functional areas including HR, Finance, Student Information, Estates and Research to provide rich insights through advanced analytics and business intelligence technologies.

Objective 5: Transformed IT infrastructure

In the latest update, there is a much stronger focus on Information security to reflect the increasing importance of this element.

We have increased the size of our information security team, implemented best practice information security governance structures and continued to invest in better information security technology. Awareness programmes are on-going and information security training is now mandatory for all staff.

Looking forwards we need to complete our cyber essentials accreditation and continue our investment in technology to protect UCL against current and emerging threats.

Besides information security, there have been strong developments with the IT service desk through the integration of the HR systems helpdesk, the Finance systems helpdesk and the IoE service desk. Between the 2015 and 2016 Cubane Uniforum service satisfaction surveys we have seen satisfaction with the IT service desk increase by 45%.

A new much simplified and improved student desktop based on Windows 10 has been rolled out over summer 2017.

Work is well progressed on the new platform technologies (wso2 and ETL) to provide a modern middleware layer to provide a new way to provide interfacing between our systems. In the future any interaction between our systems will go through these platform technologies and not directly point-to-point as has been the case in the past.

Phase 1 of UCL’s new on-site datacentre in Torrington Place has been completed. This together with our offsite facility will enable UCL to consolidate provision around two modern and efficient facilities that have the capacity and flexibility to meet UCL’s current and future demands.

Looking forwards we need to continue to invest in core infrastructure to ensure we’re able to provide the IT enabled services that facilitate today’s research and underpin an excellent educational experience.

Objective 6: Deliver a high-performance and customer centric culture with efficient processes and effective services

Under objective 6 we seek to ensure the new and improved services identified in other parts of the Digital Masterplan can be effectively and efficiently delivered and operated.

In the updated version of the masterplan we have reaffirmed our commitment to a strong customer and service focus and highlight the importance of skilled and empowered staff. We also draw out the importance of good design and a relentless push for standardisation and simplification as critical ingredients for the highly efficient and effective services we seek.