

TRANSFORMING OUR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



UCL

A SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED ABOUT THE EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE DESIGN DURING THE TOPS ENGAGEMENT PERIOD (SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2017)

THE ENGAGEMENT PERIOD- WHO, WHEN AND WHY?

During the autumn term (2017), we published the [TOPS Emerging Ideas](#) and ran a series of engagement activities to discuss and receive honest and open feedback on these. During this time, the TOPS Programme team carried out **95 engagement sessions** and acquired feedback from other channels, such as online surveys and feedback to the TOPS mailbox. We have now collated **1712 pieces of specific feedback** from across these channels. This feedback relates to the emerging ideas and service designs for the various Professional Service areas, the wider TOPS programme and specific department or faculty implications. All of the feedback received has been systematically recorded.

The engagement of UCL staff and their contributions throughout this feedback process have been invaluable and provided the TOPS Programme Team, Professional Services Leadership Team and Senior Management Team with important insights from the people who engage with our professional services on a daily basis. This has helped us to:

- understand views and perceptions on the TOPS design emerging ideas
- understand the impact these ideas may have on roles, departments or faculties
- improve these designs and develop the wider TOPS implementation plan.

WHAT HAVE WE HEARD ABOUT EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT PROPOSED SERVICE DESIGN?

In addition to the original direct input to the workshop and world café sessions, feedback relating specifically Education Administration and Student Support across the various engagement channels represents **21%** of all feedback received in the autumn term. We have collated and analysed these responses to identify themes that we have heard repeatedly. In the case of Education Administration and Student Support these can be categorised into four key themes.

1) Feedback relating to the splitting of Programme Administrator and Student Support roles was received in high volume and has been mixed

A high proportion of the feedback received on Education Administration and Student Support was related to the principle of making the Programme Administrator role distinct from a Student Advisor role and the concept of three functional areas: Programme Administration, Student Administration and Planning and Governance. While there has been some objection to the idea of splitting the Programme Administrator and Student Advisor roles, comprehensive analysis of the feedback reveals that UCL stakeholder views are mixed. The feedback also reveals the inconsistency in the existing Teaching Administrator role, with the numbers of students these individuals are responsible for fluctuating between 100 and 500. Feedback has made clear a concern over the attractiveness of a Programme Administration role, however, many stakeholders have been positive about the impact these dedicated roles could have on students. These mixed views have been representative of the views amongst Teaching Administrators themselves, who appreciate the positive impact this could have on workload, while also advocating the current varied nature of their role.

2) Improvements to Portico are seen as essential to improving the student experience

Throughout the TOPS Programme engagement period we have regularly heard about the challenges that are experienced with Portico. There is unanimous support that developing Portico so that it is fit for purpose will improve the efficiency of professional services staff and consequently the service they are able to provide.

3) There is a need for further clarity around what the emerging ideas mean for Faculty teams and how it would work

The feedback we have received from UCL stakeholders has highlighted that there remains a need for further clarity regarding how the emerging ideas for EASS will impact upon Faculty teams and the way they work. Examples of this include the role of the Faculty Tutor and timetabling responsibilities. Some stakeholders have informed us of the complexity of timetabling being delivered at faculty level by explaining how this is an ongoing, often weekly, process that can require specific knowledge at a Department level. Despite this, there is some support for faculty delivery of this service which would provide a platform for departments to outline specific requirements and intricacies. The Faculty Tutor role is unquestionably considered very important across the institution and the feedback suggests further consideration and engagement, related to how this role could be affected by the emerging ideas, is required.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The process of collecting the feedback has been invaluable and contributed significantly to the work of the TOPS Programme team. The feedback has been shared with the Service Leadership Teams for each professional services area. Any decisions for if, how or when the service designs may change will be made by a representative group of colleagues from across the university.

While the formal feedback collection process has now been completed we still welcome any comments you may have about the TOPS Programme and these can be emailed to the TOPS inbox at tops@ucl.ac.uk

| Feedback Source | Feedback |
|---------------------|--|
| Engineering Science | There is support for a mini-registry type function at Faculty level. However, the key is the detail and practicalities around some of the services suggested |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Engineering Science | You told us that Timetabling at Faculty level would not be practical and needs to be explored further. The “super-user” role needs to be clarified |
| Engineering Science | The design needs to take into account that co-ordination goes beyond Faculty boundaries (e.g. the electives process is extremely complex - particularly in an area such as The School of Management) |
| Engineering Science | We have ambition for greater interdisciplinary activity as a University and the model needs to make this easier |
| Engineering Science | Need to consider how this model will enable Teaching Fellows to better deliver their role (currently they have to resolve a lot of the poor processes, room booking etc. themselves – not the best use of time). Be explicit around how it will support colleagues in these positions |
| Engineering Science | We need to be a good teaching university. One stop shop at the Faculty level, agility to respond (personal and technical investment required) |
| Engineering Science | Although there was a lot of student feedback on the issue during the design process (and support amongst TAs etc.), separation of student support / programme administration roles may not be straightforward. The variety creates interesting roles as colleagues enjoy both aspects. Channelling staff into one or the other may create turnover issues and need to identify the right sort of blend |
| Engineering Science | Turnover of programme administrators / student advisors is perceived to be high (root cause around LM, support, lack of progression opportunities etc.). Should explore this further as need to ensure we avoid significant turnover in these roles as a result of the new model |
| Engineering Science | Need to be wary that Student satisfaction is low where turnover is high |
| Engineering Science | HR processes can’t move quickly so handover period results in reduction of service / poor handover etc. The time delays should be addressed (e.g. notice period for grade 7) |
| Engineering Science | A number of professional service staff in this area are managed by academics and don’t always have the structured development / support needed |
| Engineering Science | Need to ensure student support and programme administration is not “one deep”. This has got people exercised and can’t have these single points of failure |
| Engineering Science | When we look at the model we need to ask “is this going to deliver our strategy over the next 5-10 years? (World of TEF, academic strategy of greater choice)” |
| Engineering Science | Need to invest in the communications / engagement – call to be made on how far the university wants to invest here to take people along the journey |
| SSEES | SSEES is of a scale and profile that is different from many other faculties and, as a single department faculty, has already established harmonious faculty wide processes and systems allied to strong relationships and dual reporting lines across the faculty and centre |
| SSEES | The TOPS putative model appears to align to the established set-up for TSEEA within SSEES and therefore may not require significant changes to ways of working |
| SSEES | To improve the student experience it would be beneficial to see electronic attendance for students, particularly for Tier 4 overseas students |
| MAPS | There was support for a “mini registry” from a number of colleagues within MAPS, particularly where there are delegated authorities for those activities which can be dealt with more effectively at a local level |

| | |
|------|--|
| MAPS | Some of the decision making MAPS would like to see delegated include programme approval, managing interruptions, student status, student records super user activity. Delegation in these areas will enable departmental and Faculty staff to more effectively and rapidly respond to student needs (rather than refer upwards to Registry) |
| MAPS | There was recognition that if substantial activity was devolved we would need to work through the resource implication |
| MAPS | The issue of teaching space was raised immediately in one group. All attendees recognise this is a key issue. One individual suggested that nobody had this on their radar / was not a strategic priority which was contested |
| MAPS | Would welcome enhancements to IT to support self-service for students (one example provided was around making the pre-arrival experience much more automated) |
| MAPS | One group recognised the improvements centralised admissions had made and the importance of having this relatively close to departments (to enable relationships to be developed) |
| MAPS | However, there were calls for improvements to governance and oversight throughout the workshop |
| MAPS | The priority processes and systems for change was challenged in one group (e.g. using the example of trying to improve attendance monitoring without success). It was suggested that although local attempts to improve the process had failed, this should not prevent attempts to improve the quality of student journey processes across UCL (a key part of this programme) |
| MAPS | There was desire to see the detailed recommendations for processes / systems. It was outlined that this is the work planned for next year and that level of design is not available yet |
| MAPS | A change in focus of the Faculty Tutor function was welcomed by many. Agreement that the skills required to make this a success may be different to those expected of a Faculty Tutor |
| MAPS | The image used by the TOPS team did not include the role of the Vice Dean for Education which has now been corrected (it is included in the fuller packs developed by the central teams) |
| MAPS | In one group, the value of the student experience function was challenged and there was a desire to see detail of the JD. However, there was support for this function in other groups as a focal point of responsibility for improving student experience, managing those staff involved in student support and creating a community across the Faculty |
| MAPS | Some colleagues could see the value of a clearer distinction between programme administration and student advisor / support roles. However, there were challenges to the potential changes to the line management of the student support role. The need for a blended role in smaller departments - which brings the best of both – was also raised |
| MAPS | The attendees would like TOPS to engage with Personal Tutors in the next phase to show how these roles will work together |
| MAPS | We need to recognise good and bad teaching. Its currently hard to recognise good teaching within UCL so the TOPS model will help |
| MAPS | TOPS needs a clearer focus on PGR |
| MAPS | MAPS have a faculty graduate research role which aligns to the TOPS ideas (also roles in communications, careers) |
| MAPS | The teams would like to see the ideas presented to MAPS key committees which TOPS will take forward through the MAPS engagement plan |
| MAPS | TOPS should emphasise that PGR comes under student support, as its not currently clear |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| MAPS | Attendance monitoring has already been tried in MAPS and didn't work causing delays in lectures |
| MAPS | Questions were asked around the impact on DMs if line management roles become dotted line |
| MAPS | It would be good to have a MAPS communications newsletter to understand what is happening in departments across the Faculty |
| Life Science | SLMS has strong divisional teams with an effective personal tutoring system. Will the introduction of the new Programme Directors and Programme Administrators roles see an increase in headcount or is it proposing a restructuring of existing roles? Bio sciences is one of the biggest divisions within UCL and has recently reviewed the structure of its team. |
| Life Science | Questions over what benefits the proposed student advisors will bring as they aren't academics. The strong personal tutoring network within SLMS makes the additional role unnecessary. |
| Life Science | There is a lack of clarity over what the emerging ideas mean for the Faculty. Does it mean an increase in headcount, as there are operational constraints that will need to be considered if this is the case? TOPS needs to ensure its recommendations are achievable within the Faculty's financial envelope. |
| Life Science | FLS have research led teaching Faculty Tutor which works very well, we need to think carefully about how this will work in the future |
| Life Science | There is a feeling that a lot of the points have been created without SLMS input/ knowledge, how much of this has been decided? FLS will have to operationalise the TOPS strategy but do TOPS understand the operational constraints? |
| Life Science | In small departments, would the roles combine or would there be a sharing of resources between departments? |
| Life Science | Clear support for investment in IT and jobs family proposals |
| Life Science | The proposals don't solve the 'us vs. them' issue between faculties and central services. Secondments were originally discussed as part of TOPS and it would help this issue and career progression? |
| Life Science | Attendees would like to see investment in professional development (training and people) |
| LAWS | As a single department faculty the mini-registry roles are more likely to be shared |
| LAWS | It will be interesting to see how the model feeds into the Centre. At present it is difficult to contact them as there is a generic email box so difficult to know who to contact and reach out to |
| LAWS | The TSEEA approach for Laws works well at the moment, so would not be particularly keen on changing. If the roles are mandated Laws have headcount constraints so how will it be managed? |
| LAWS | In the past there has tended to be a lot of short-term quick fixes rather than a strategic view around changing the student experience |
| LAWS | There will be a substantive change for the faculty tutor. Will there be a move away from academia, will they stop teaching? Faculty tutors have been recruited from academia and it works well in Laws |
| LAWS | Currently the faculty tutor is placed at the department level. What will be the relationship between faculty tutor and vice dean of education in the TOPS model? The role of programme directors needs clarifying |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| LAWS | Currently Laws retain admissions process, and there are a couple of staff that work on admissions process - it works very well and laws wouldn't want to see this centralised |
| Bartlett | TOPS needs to be clearer on vision for the student experience and how the ideas for change will deliver this |
| Bartlett | How will the student experience change over the next 5 – 10 years? |
| Bartlett | What kind of relationship do we want with our students (and their influencers e.g. parents)? The relationship can be very different at an individual level. |
| Bartlett | We need to identify the future life of students (think about external influences) |
| Bartlett | How do we form relationships with students for life and not just study period? |
| Bartlett | The majority of students still want face time with academics alongside technical improvements. In our experience the more local the service the better it is received by students |
| Bartlett | We need to think about our current assets, we have a large London footprint and we need to make the most of this |
| Bartlett | Expectations are clearly rising, we need to manage these so our students are also aware of the constraints |
| Bartlett | The opportunity for devolved responsibilities in some key areas was welcomed by several colleagues (an event has been set up with the BEST team to discuss further). Opportunities lie in change module, interruptions, transfer, entering marks |
| Bartlett | One example was offered of an individual responsible for 500 student's pastoral care |
| Bartlett | Faculty tutor role is key and need to consider adjustments to this very carefully. This has already been considered a lot in the Bartlett. |
| Bartlett | The tone of voice in communications is vital |
| Bartlett | There needs to be more clarity on how the programme and student roles will work. Splitting these roles has practical issues in some parts of the faculty and will make them much less attractive |
| Bartlett | Variation in processes and opportunity to simplify and enhance consistency is positive (e.g. some parts have brought in AMS for attendance monitoring) |
| Bartlett | There are plenty of opportunities for better self service |
| SHS / A&H | There is a lot of dissatisfaction around admissions and it needs to be improved. We lose applicants because we don't respond quickly enough and applicants go elsewhere. There is a level of inflexibility as the admissions team don't understand the subject to the same level as tutors. A degree of centralisation but with academic understanding would probably be the most appropriate model |
| SHS / A&H | Student experience is dependent on programme manager - students will go to the most knowledgeable person and splitting them out might not work |
| SHS / A&H | NSS praise is always on individuals that have managed students |
| SHS / A&H | Timetabling - there is a lot of negotiating at departments to get rooms and it might be better to have at school level - needs better MI to solve it |
| SHS / A&H | If we have a mini-registry there needs to be a reporting mechanism into the centre |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| SHS / A&H | A number of the proposed roles already exist in school level |
| SHS / A&H | UCL wide (standard) electronic attendance monitoring would be really useful for cross-course teaching |
| SHS / A&H | Faculty tutor can't go anywhere, incredibly valuable and a key role. Faculty tutor is a partnering role with Faculty Manager |
| SHS / A&H | Vice Deans get no honorarium. Not perhaps part of TOPS but would be good to address as we're behind other institutions |
| SHS / A&H | Faculty graduate tutors have a small honorarium to take on a significant amount of additional work - out of scope for TOPS but we will feed back into the institution |
| Population Health | Recognising the opportunities presented by devolved responsibilities (in areas which will streamline decision making and reduce delays). PHS have a model of cross modular courses - point of contact will be at the institution level. |
| Population Health | Where can self-service be best deployed and how will we do that? There will be a people element to self-service that will need to be managed as well |
| Engineering Science | TOPS will be reliant on IT and data - the designs are dependent on it. Data is critical to success of this (and a concern). |
| Engineering Science | Serious investment is required to meet our expectations around student IT. It has been neglected over the years and we need to ensure investment is enduring and not a one-off. There was an independent report into student IT that the TOPS team should review – Simon is going to send this through |
| Engineering Science | We should move away from all academic staff having pastoral care, not all are suited and it would be good to specialise the support to students |
| Engineering Science | There should be consistency around naming roles. All faculties provide the same functions so why not make consistent for students? |
| Engineering Science | Director of Education Experience – there needs further clarity about the role and who it will report to. |
| Engineering Science | Strong feedback on the potential Faculty Tutor role. Needs further clarity and engagement around what will work best – this has been fed back and plenty to follow in the autumn |
| Engineering Science | The TOPS student design is missing international students. We need strong international relationships and it feels like we haven't invested enough in UCL previously. It would be good for an international role at the faculty level that links to the International Student Director |
| Engineering Science | Engineering Science will be in the first phase for UCL East and the model needs to be flexible enough to cope with this change |
| Engineering Science | Due to CMA rulings it can take five years to make changes to modules and registry. It would be good to have specialist advice from the centre to advise Engineering Science. There should be a central Tier 4 Visa as a central service, this should not be at the faculty level |
| Engineering Science | We need to approach the design from the perspective of the student. Students are often interacting with more than one faculty and there needs to be consistency to ensure a common experience |
| Engineering Science | There is currently a barrier between taught and research students which is slightly artificial as research have taught elements and it would be good to expose undergraduates to research |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Engineering Science | Where does Educational Outreach sit? It feeds into education programmes |
| Engineering Science | Exam boards could be raised up to faculty level to ensure greater consistency |
| Engineering Science | Central Registry still needs to be a functional working body and TOPS will need to identify how the interfaces (especially around delegated authority) would work if we are creating a 'mini-registry' at the faculty level. Case studies would be a good way to work through and understand the impacts (Faculty tutors can supply these) for example where would information be stored, at the moment they are archived centrally, but are difficult to access. Would faculties require a local archiving faculty, if so it will have resource implications |
| Engineering Science | It would be good to link in e-learning to the design |
| Engineering Science | It would be a good opportunity to bring careers, laboratory support and life learning up to the faculty level to be provided at scale. In our experience services supplied at faculty level get bought into by departments and it works well. We should be aware that some departments already have their own careers advice |
| SHS / A&H | The fundamental remit of education strategy and planning, enhancement, quality assurance, student lifecycle and education administration, and student support is right and captures the portfolio of Faculty Tutors/Directors of Education and the related part of the Faculty Office, acknowledging the key strength of marrying strategy and policy with a technical understanding of how things work operationally. |
| SHS / A&H | 'Mini-registries' and devolution: This has merit. There are obvious inefficiencies in the current workflows between faculty and central administration, and overall far too many transactions travel up and down through all three institutional layers, often repeatedly so. Student record data entry (for which the proposal of SITS super-users at faculty level is welcome), and approval levels are two of the most salient areas in this respect. |
| SHS / A&H | Hierarchy: While it is pleasing to see the recognition the Faculty Tutors' 'important leadership role within the faculty' under point ②, the black top box in the diagram does the opposite and has caused considerable consternation among colleagues. Faculty Managers and Vice-Deans Education do perhaps not exactly belong in the same box as the Dean, but Faculty Tutors/Directors of Education do belong in the same box as Faculty Managers and Vice-Deans Education. They are grade 10 senior staff line managed by the Dean, serving the Dean, and acting on behalf of the Dean. We agreed that this should be corrected. |
| SHS / A&H | Title: 'Director of Education and Student Experience' and 'Student Experience & Education Manager' are not equivalent titles: the latter is not only more junior, but also more operational and transactional – and Faculty Tutors' relationship with academic colleagues in departments would not be helped by being called 'managers'. The former title was discussed and agreed with Faculty Tutors in the early summer. (I would, however add, that 'Director of Education and Student Affairs' might capture the breadth of the portfolio slightly better, and I know that a couple of colleagues agree.) |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| SHS / A&H | <p>Student Experience Manager:</p> <p>a) Faculty level: Both I and the Faculty Manager had doubts as to what a full-time faculty student experience manager would do in addition to the management and direction already provided by the Faculty Tutor and the Vice-Dean Education. This may be a case of one-size-does-not-fit-all, considering the differences between single subject faculties and the disciplinary diversity contained in the joint faculties. In our case at least, the emphasis should be at departmental level, with appropriate (but not full-time) faculty oversight.</p> <p>b) Departmental level: It does not seem quite clear how the proposal of student support staff separate from programme administrators relates to the current and deeply embedded role of the Departmental Tutor. There are three successful instances of professionalised Departmental Tutor positions in the Joint Faculties and there may be some potential for expanding this. However, this could hardly be done systematically, given the great differences in size between departments (and the need for front-line student support to be fully anchored in the programme and department).</p> <p>c) Operations resource factors: Both the Faculty Manager and I observed that the student experience is crucially impacted by enabling operational resource factors such as estate and staff-student ratios that cross over into other portfolios.</p> |
| SHS / A&H | <p>Examination Boards: Point ① refers to 'examination boards' under mini-registry functions. The Joint Faculties contain 67 plus examination boards (and currently not only two schemes of awards, but also significant number of local rules). Centralising the ELO (examination liaison officer) function for these would not be feasible without creating a relatively high number of positions at faculty level, which would then be faced with high workload in spring and autumn and little else to do for the rest of the year, while the vital communications link between the chair of the examinations board and his or her ELO would suffer. Exam board administration should be properly considered a systems issue, not a role issue: the implementation of the Academic Model Project combined with the introduction of the new TSSE Assessment, progression, award, classifications regime will automate this to a very considerable degree. Creating a significant number of faculty positions for administrative tasks that are now largely about to be automated within the near future would seem to cause unnecessary disruption and then create a legacy staffing problem shortly after the change.</p> |
| SHS / A&H | <p>Extenuating Circumstances: Point ① refers the transformation of 'panel-based processes'. At present the only significant panel-based process in this area is the only recently reformed extenuating circumstances procedure. It is worth distinguishing between the panel aspect and the institutional level:</p> <p>a) Panels: It is true that the new EC procedure has turned decisions previously made by individual role-holders into panel decisions. While arguably better in terms of deliberative decision-making, I have previously questioned the workload implications of this. Considering the availability of multiple appeals, there may be potential for streamlining here.</p> <p>b) Level: Departments' partial ability to deal with extenuating circumstances under the current delegation system, however, is important: students prefer to deal with their teachers and administrators instead of an anonymous bureaucracy; a majority of colleagues welcomes the ability to look after their students in these matters (recent devolution has been popular); and in the case of the Joint Faculties' almost 9,000 taught students, centralising this at faculty would involve the creation of a significant bureaucracy at a remove from frontline staff and students. Hardly any extenuating circumstances decision can ever be made without local input from the department. Revoking all departmental powers in this area would therefore involve a greater workload increase at faculty level than decrease at departmental level, thereby increasing overall workload while decreasing efficiency.</p> |
| SHS / A&H | <p>Admissions: Point #1 on the discussion/comments slide discusses the fact that there is 'a lot of dissatisfaction around admissions and it needs to be improved'. However, the slide then notes that a 'degree of centralisation but with academic understanding would probably be the most appropriate model'. But admissions in the Joint Faculties are already centralised along these lines, yet the relationship between departments and Admissions remains unhappy, so that this</p> |

| | |
|----------------|---|
| | does not appear to offer us a way forward. We would welcome a framework for systematically reviewing the admissions issues. |
| SHS / A&H | Roles vs. functions: The Teaching Student Experience Education Administration chart is more focussed on roles than those for other areas. Given the differences in size and nature between UCL's faculties, this may be in latent tension with the rTSSEAssurance that one size does not fit all. A greater emphasis on functions as opposed to roles would be helpful. It is right that there are a defined number of tasks that every faculty must fulfil, and it is also right that the central administration requires accountability and a clear interface for this. But telling faculties that there are things that they must do and that for some or all of these tasks there must be clear, named, and accountable contacts for the central administration is not the same as needing to tell faculties how to structure their administration to best fulfil these tasks in light of their particular circumstances. In general, roles are not the problem, but systems and processes are. |
| SHS / A&H | Resource: While we welcome the mini-registry proposal, we are concerned about resource. UCL's registry is underfunded both in relation to student numbers and in sector comparison. We would welcome devolution delivering efficiencies and service improvement, but not a transfer of underfunding that would merely shift continuing dissatisfaction to faculty level. New functions would require adequate resourcing enabling the faculty to perform any additional tasks well. |
| IOE | Positive and supportive of the 3 role proposal for support (staff facing, student facing etc.), though would like to consult with wider staff |
| IOE | Would like responsibility and authority to help student at faculty level |
| IOE | Discretion and confidentiality crucial for student support – you can't expect students to walk into a room that says 'mental health support' if they can be seen by other students, so location is crucial |
| IOE | Is there a clash between institution-wide systems and local responsibility? Doesn't have to be if the right permissions and authorities are given and the right parameters are set |
| IOE | Timescales for these changes – if this will happen quite quickly we won't try and change locally, if this will take years we will have to find some work-arounds for now? |
| IOE | Will faculties pay for faculty resource? Beyond business partners |
| IOE | Very positive about Business Partner model though don't like the word 'business' in an academic context – can be renamed 'Departmental or Faculty Partner'? |
| Brain Sciences | Teaching support would be best placed at the institute level |
| Brain Sciences | Design doesn't seem to resemble what was agreed at the working groups |
| Brain Sciences | Need to consider job load as administrators can oversee 2 or 3 programmes |
| Brain Sciences | Would be good to have faculty level support for mental health |
| Brain Sciences | Student lifecycle doesn't encompass the totality of what was discussed in working groups - It's not just the standard process but requests for extensions, medical leave etc. which take up a lot of time as need to be handled individually |
| Brain Sciences | Faculty Tutor should be director of education and student experience |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Brain Sciences | Programme administrator and student support shouldn't be split, it currently works very well and one doesn't really work without the other |
| Brain Sciences | How will mini-registry work without additional resources? |
| Life Sciences | It's a very complicated process to try and meet everybody's progression needs so that you are not losing the best professional services talent. How can we ensure that we are providing appropriate opportunities? |
| Life Sciences | With non-embedded staff you need to find a mechanism of ensuring they feel engaged and they are adding value to the institution- difficult task but ways of doing it |
| Life Sciences | Improving student experience often requires more resource- do we have the resource? |
| Life Sciences | Student advisors don't need to be new staff- we just need to provide coherent training to recognise what existing staff are doing and what support they need to do it more effectively |
| Life Sciences | Student advisor roles benefit from consistency- students are usually here for 3-4 years and need some level of consistency |
| Life Sciences | Run out of rewards for staff who are doing their job well (outside of promotion)- pay grades limit this (lack of discretion) |
| Survey Feedback | Yes! The model you are proposing is one I have worked with in other HEIs. It was really successful and allowed departmental staff to focus on the key needs of their students and academics whilst faculty staff had a greater overview and led everyone in one direction. |
| Survey Feedback | I'm not convinced that moving responsibilities around in this way is what is needed to facilitated collaboration and co-operation. In some ways although it putatively provides a first point of contact in departments - the potential for work "teflon" loops - where the first point of contact person spends an awful lot of time being bounced round people who say "this is not my job" is the same (and temporarily greater) as the current set up. Same cake, sliced a different way, still the same cake. |
| Survey Feedback | I support the addition of student advisor roles to the current Teaching & Learning Administrator set up. I am not among those T&LA administrators who wants to be a student advisor. Advice work requires specific, different training and skills to being a T&LA administrator - with a specific set of NVQ qualifications associated with them. I would be concerned that existing Teaching & Learning Administrators - when they actually reflect on it don't have the skills or background to do this role. |
| Survey Feedback | I think for the first couple of years you need to push 'one size fits all'. I know this is not popular in UCL but the alternative leads to our current situation. |
| Survey Feedback | With regards to consistency - provide guidance/ on processes and structures without making them mandatory. In a great many cases people will follow the process given because it is the path of least resistance. However, in an academic institution where academics feel any imposition is a threat, you will always get some who derogate because they perceive imposition (often erroneously) as curtailing academic freedom. |
| Survey Feedback | Great structural ideas. Don't be side tracked by millions of staff wanting their own customised version |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Survey Feedback | I have two significant concerns regarding the splitting of Teaching & Learning Administration in this way. Currently many Teaching & Learning Administrators hold an overview of the whole programme from enquiry to graduation that covers both some insight into the academic speciality, and the technicalities of timetabling, Quality Assurance, exam boards, etc. If these functions are moved "up" to faculty then Programme Administrators and Programme Directors will need to be in contact with 5 or 6 people to get done what Teaching & Learning Administrators have previously done in the department. Assuming that Programme Administrators are all Grade 6 (which is highly likely since "efficiency" is often a synonym for "cost cutting") there can be no guarantee that the people in these roles will have the skills to maintain the current level of oversight. This means that cognitive load currently borne by Teaching & Learning Administrators (particularly the senior ones) is going to revert to Programme Directors/ Academic Staff... most of whom are already struggling to carry out their research, teaching and "Administrative" work. Plus - again the potential for "work |
| Survey Feedback | Teflon" loops - where Programme Directors get passed around multiple people who say "that's not my job" is large. For the first 18 months the resulting confusion could well be detrimental to the student experience. I also have concerns that this will do nothing to address opportunities for career development for administrative staff. There is limited scope for development within departments (at institutional level this works in the same way as all organisations with role based administration - councils, NHS etc) and a greater focus on seeing one's career as UCL based rather than department based works wonders. The proposed model will be just as "siloed" as departments - but will silo people by role. Whilst the model proposed might work for bigger departments. For small departments and interdisciplinary centres (working sometimes across faculties/ departments) it's very difficult to see how they will fit into this model - and it seems likely that whilst a Programme Administrator might sit in the centre -the Student Advisor would be at a higher level - possibly in a different department and a different building. |
| Joint Faculty | Admissions- example of an experience where it was thought moving this centrally would be positive but it has not been effective |
| Joint Faculty | Why are admissions so slow and so inaccurate? Does the centralisation mean that excessive checks and bureaucracy reduce efficiency of time? Admissions awareness of system is not as high level as academics but would this be an appropriate use of academics time |
| Joint Faculty | Needs to be someone available all day everyday as a point of contact for students- debatable whether this should be separate from programme administrators |
| Joint Faculty | It is clear that poor student support due to staffing issues are a factor in our poor NSS score |
| Joint Faculty | There is difference across the university in terms of NSS score- will there be exceptions to broad centralisation and adoption? What about those teams that are working well? |
| Joint Faculty | Positive feedback about freeing up people resources through improved processes and self-service- this can speed up our ability and increase our flexibility to have an impact on students |
| Joint Faculty | 30% of our students are on statements of reasonable support-. Students need more than administrative availability- they need experienced academics available during working hours. Duty of care to our students- they come to departments but we are not qualified to provide the support they require (mental health) |
| Joint Faculty | Students don't just want to be told about procedures- they want to be able to talk to people who have had similar experiences and can empathise |
| Joint Faculty | What about psychological services? It's a huge issue- there are instances of immediate need where vulnerable people are at risk Where can we direct to in these instances? Students are waiting 4-6 weeks to be seen when they can be in a very bad way |
| Joint Faculty | Departmental tutor model can be very effective- a point of contact with academic experience who can direct people appropriately. Just having somebody there is very important. The |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| | challenge is to convince deans and VPs of the value of such posts, particularly in the midst of things like the REF |
| Joint Faculty | Really important that central services can deliver transactional services to the faculties and departments- this is powerful in freeing up the time of local staff |
| Joint Faculty | People leaving posts in central services- this causes stress amongst remaining staff and becomes a cyclical process. It is important to investigate and deal with the issues of retention. |
| Joint Faculty | It is criminal how patently under resourced some of professional services are- they are often faced with an impossible task. PS staff are very unhappy, is this being investigated |
| Joint Faculty | A large volume of temp staff across- the university- really positive about the idea of temp pool and the pathways this may provide for staff |
| Joint Faculty | Issue of timetabling being at faculty level- not going to be possible. There needs to be timetabling at department level- cannot function otherwise. |
| Medical Sciences | Studentship - students who come in but need to get paid like staff; this is very complicated currently and is requiring a local system - needs to get fed into the system design |
| Medical Sciences | Common timetabling: students need to be able to see all the different schedules to be able to book modules and choose courses etc. , but you can only combine courses sensibly when the timetabling has a common template or structure |
| Medical Sciences | Resourcing is very uneven across the faculty; |
| Medical Sciences | Education manager is a really helpful role, but we only have it in three dept out of the six - some consistency would be helpful (allowing for needed variation) |
| Medical Sciences | Costing model averages per number of students? Some methodology needed |
| SHS / A&H | Admissions - currently understaffed for the number of applications they need to process |
| SHS / A&H | Good to run admissions almost centrally to enjoy economies of scale - but with the right input from faculties and departments around their own offerings and requirements |
| SHS / A&H | Some elements of admissions process can sit in the service centre eventually, but there is always a human, variable element that required expertise and experience |
| SHS / A&H | Faculty relationship with students still important, so admissions officers might sit locally even if processes are central? |
| SHS / A&H | Lines of communication are key - knowing who to go to and who you can speak to and get feedback from |
| SHS / A&H | Can services move later? Services kept local for now while we are fixing them, then when everything works perhaps it will be viable to centralise more.... |
| SHS / A&H | Mini registry idea: how will faculty level roles change? Hopefully we'd like to see a better support team; Faculty tutor role likely to change |
| SHS / A&H | Super users around timetabling and student records? |
| SHS / A&H | Timetabling currently has to work at department level, because there are 20 depts. and at faculty level it's just not viable |
| SHS / A&H | People who do timetabling - what do they do the rest of the time? This is very cyclical / episodic work |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| SHS / A&H | Need the right resources to get this right - currently workloads and student loads vary hugely |
| SHS / A&H | Life learning? Vary variable between dept. and faculty? Feeds into innovation/enterprise workstream... |
| SHS / A&H | Hopeful that we free up resource to be more student-facing |
| SHS / A&H | Administrators to come together and work across departments? Should be possible once the systems are working |
| SHS / A&H | Student advisor role - reviewed in conjunction with review of chapter 1 of manual / regulations (???) |
| SHS / A&H | Levels of authority and sign off need reviewing as well - delegation and risk management needs to be done correctly |
| Bartlett | 30 attendees were asked if only one process around the student lifecycle could be fixed, what would they choose- the three common repeated themes were student enrolment/module/selection/registration etc, improvements to portico so that reports can be interpreted more easily and deliver more capabilities and communication with professional services. Other issues mentioned included the processes around exams and assessments and room booking processes |
| Bartlett | Too many fragmented points of contact for students- they should have one key point of contact who can then redirect accordingly- risk of overwhelming them with the sheer volume of people |
| Bartlett | A single point of contact with a positive relationship to discuss academic and personal issues is important- splitting that can be complicated as there is not a clear line between personal and academic. |
| Bartlett | It is necessary to do the staff facing role (programme administrator) to be effective and show a connection with students (student advisor)- Student advisor role is informed by a knowledge of the processes. General consensus that programme administrator and student advisor roles should not be split. Worried that programme administrator roles wouldn't be attractive- they want the student facing aspect |
| Bartlett | Personal tutor roles vary across departments- seems to be too undergraduate focus- PG consideration needs to be made clear |
| Bartlett | Faculty office have limited contact with students- more back office, strategy and governance. Specific to this faculty and its structure. There is a good reason for these structures |
| Bartlett | Students are participants not consumers- do these ideas undermine this and things like the connected curriculum? Many of the things I do require a knowledge of both sides (student and programme) |
| Bartlett | More resources through recruiting more people and not by splitting roles- more standardised responsibilities for individuals within teams (job descriptions and titles vary between departments and faculties) |
| Bartlett | Workload challenges- some administrators providing support to 500 students- is it feasible to recruit enough people to provide this on a 1-100 basis |
| Bartlett | People who have an overview as a whole tend to understand better and this enables them to solve problems more effectively- it also provides a chain for progression |
| Bartlett | Pressures to increase number of programmes and number of students- it is important to remember the need for support when doing business plans for this. The conversation may change once portico is actually fit for purpose |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Bartlett | Training provision needs to improve to support staff to deliver what the students need? For example- mental health support. There needs to be a wider strategic purpose and what is it doing for the overall teaching proposition. Maintaining student contact is important in maintaining their state of mind to a degree where they are able to effectively develop knowledge. Effective student support is fundamental to deliver good teaching |
| Bartlett | Size of individual departments has an impact on managers ability to understand staff strengths and weaknesses |
| Bartlett | Don't believe that timetabling would work at faculty level- is the knowledge there? Timetabling isn't just one off- it happens on an almost weekly basis. This is despite the fact I would like to not have to do it |
| Bartlett | It could work if we could feed in our requirements using our specific knowledge then dedicated users could implement this onto the system- this couldn't work without that contact and dialogue |
| Bartlett | people have to be willing to be flexible on when to deliver programmes to meet available resources- for example teaching on a Friday afternoon to access space- programme directors want to teach in the middle of the day on Tuesday's, Wednesday's and Thursday's |
| Bartlett | Timetabling needs a proper updated system- room booking rather scheduling at UCL |
| Bartlett | Exam boards managed at faculty levels- most administration for this is already held at faculty level in the Bartlett- faculty involvement is positive in ensuring compliance but local knowledge is also invaluable |
| Bartlett | Delineating job descriptions such as student experience for example- clearly articulate responsibilities |
| Bartlett | Clarity and consistency between faculty and departments are the key to this proposal being successful |
| Bartlett | Division between administrative responsibilities and the responsibilities of academics |
| Bartlett | Problematic that some academics are deprioritising teaching so that they can focus on research- often told to do so by their line managers- this leaves administrators with responsibilities that academics should be delivering |
| Bartlett | Student support side of the role is one of the most interesting- makes the administration role less dynamic and engaging- not good for career progression |
| Bartlett | If the additional student advisor role is implemented it needs to be at departmental level to make use of specialist knowledge |
| Bartlett | Responses to the departments from faculty or central need to be timely so that responses can be given to students quickly and effectively |
| Survey Feedback | No. Your ideas seem to just add another layer of bureaucracy, completely unnecessary. Currently, the students come to the departments with their problems and, in the rare situation when the department cannot solve the problem, the students are sent to the registry. Under your proposal, there will be three levels of administration, and the students will be lost with trying to understand which one is relevant to their particular problem. And of course the new administrative bureaucracy on the faculty level will have no idea of the situation in each department. |
| Survey Feedback | I have major concerns about the idea of two separate roles, Programme Admin and Student Advisor. I do not believe these two roles can be split easily and will unless good communication at all levels the risk of some students falling through the cracks is entirely possible. |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Survey Feedback | Faculties are responsible for more departmental decisions, but are devolving this back to departments. Seeking approval on departmental decisions is adding another layer of red tape which in my opinion is totally unnecessary. Departments are expected to do more without any additional support and/or resources. Timetabling - I feel would have consequences if done at Faculty level. This at best is not practical and at worst would add another layer of bureaucracy that is unnecessary and I fail to see any benefits |
| Survey Feedback | Potentially not. Devolving too many specialist roles to Faculties provides an environment where Faculties can self-certify their supposed "special cases" and deviate from procedures - this is particularly the case if the central services have been weakened due to the resources and functions largely devolving to the Faculty. Communities of practice are an excellent idea as quality enhancement process, but these are secondary - ultimately a community of practice cannot make up for failing underlying systems, processes and governance. There are already differences in the approaches of different Faculties. |
| Survey Feedback | Superficially yes, but these are very much part of the whole. Ultimately no. This is useful tool to define aspects of student admin roles, but I think it is very dangerous to implement these as defining professional streams. These are interconnected and are more different approaches to the same data / systems / procedures. Each informs each other. The other danger is that this cuts of the front-of house from the procedures behind - the student facing administration still need to be fully aware of what is happening in the other streams (which also need student engagement, in accordance with UCL requirements!). This also side-steps the very real question of where the line between the students support to be provided by professional services and where the student support to be provided by academics is drawn. There is significant variance on the ground for the role of Personal Tutor; this is exacerbated by the continued UG slant of many regulations and procedures which often does not really work to full-time PG students who are here for one year only (but may still have support needs, particularly as the proportion of overseas continues to increase). |
| Survey Feedback | In response to splitting the programme administrator role- NO-NO-NO!!! 1) This super-specialisation creates career cul-de-sacs. 2) Each stream requires a working understanding of the other streams to function. (You can't advise a student if you don't know how the procedure works; you can't design and implement processes if you don't see the day-to-day effects on students / the student cohort. There may however be scope for more specialist support at a Faculty level - people who can come in and provide support to departments in these aspects. HOWEVER, on the front-line, these need to be unified. 3) Academics are busy enough without having to remember which one of the teaching admin team they need to go to for which aspect of support. There is every possibility that they will still direct everything to the person who responds the quickest / says what they want to hear. 4) This division may be difficult to apply in small departments where there are limited administrative staff. |
| Survey Feedback | NOTE - I have managed a teaching admin team roughly along these lines within UCL. This was mainly a response to the specific circumstances of the department and the team that I had (and their respective grades and strengths/weaknesses). It worked reasonably within the departmental/team constraints but ONLY because we were very much a team, all in the same office and conferred / delegated / shared as a matter of course. 5) Teaching Administrators typically value interaction with students and the sense of having an overall engagement with their programme / UCL's goals as one of the key positive aspects of the job. Removing this and sticking people in back-room procedural roles could lead to a lot of undesirable roles with significant risks of low morale / motivation with the attendant swift turnover (already a problem for Grade 6) for good staff. |
| Survey Feedback | Without significant, serious investment in PORTICO we are lost. It does not matter what else we do, if PORTICO and associated systems do not have the money they required we can restructure all we like. We will fail. For example, I estimate that the failure of PORTICO to perform basic functions and the need to cross reference check anything it does try to do increases workloads across teaching admin by around 20%. That is a lot of lost productivity and |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| | a lot of risky, high-chance-of-error activity. PORTICO is the great UCL scandal. This cannot be emphasised enough! |
| Survey Feedback | While it may be useful to have good/best practice and learn from other teams who have similar roles, I don't think so because the design will create two roles and this will mean that work is duplicated or serious issues/ concerns about students are lost. Any line management/support is only at Faculty level. Where is the support within the department at the local level? What about staff who need to query something in an emergency or immediate situation? If UCL use more general inboxes and a faceless contact (eg if there is no phone number to call with urgent queries) then where is the accountability? There may be reputational damage – as the suggested way of doing things may lead to complaints and less satisfaction from students, not more. More and more decision making and autonomy will be taken away from departments and smaller departments may end up having to conform to methods which would make them less efficient. If discrete tasks such as timetabling is arranged by the Faculty (as well as consequential queries about issues such as module registration) how would this work? Changes to modules made at a "higher" level has a domino effect on all programmes and modules across several departments and must be accompanied by clear comms and planning from Faculty. If Faculty control of the education administration it can lead to lack of harmonisation and lack of consistent application of the UCL regulations which is vital to ensure equitable treatment of students across all faculties. |
| Survey Feedback | Not at all, I don't think this is appropriate. It is not considered a role that you can split easily and to the benefit of the students: e.g. if a Programme Administrator is dealing with Engagement Monitoring and potential problems are raised by the EM process, how is this picked up by the Student Advisor – are we relying on emails and good communication with the danger being that something important will fall through the gaps. |
| Survey Feedback | The role of Student Advisor is unclear and if they will be expected to provide 'first line mental health support'. This role will require professional training and is better placed in the Student Psychological Services, an area that should be better funded at UCL given the increase of cases in this area. |
| Survey Feedback | There will be a lack of ownership of the tasks that cross both roles, e.g. data management between the Programme Administrator and Student Advisor. Student Advisor role "helping them to feel connected to the university, and to navigate processes and system". What does this mean? Counsellor on one hand and ISD expert on the other? Additionally some departments have historically had the same staff member doing both roles so it will be practically difficult to separate them, as well as communicate to students details as to who will take which role. What about times in the year when student need more pastoral care than usual (exam time for example) will there be additional support available? |
| Survey Feedback | Yes absolutely. It important to improve systems before changing roles to gauge where efficiencies will be made, though not just improving systems but also joining up systems that don't currently communicate with each other but if they did, and would make workarounds less necessary. We could also be assured of better record keeping both for accuracy and for confidentiality purposes in the context of student records. |
| Survey Feedback | Yes, but don't start again or make a mess of it! Many of us have spent years developing work-around to cope with Portico's foibles. If we get a wonderful, functioning system instead, great. If we just get cosmetic changes that make things worse (for example, last year I could print off a set of pictures of my personal tutees in a simple, format, this year Portico has been "improved" and the print button has gone) it would be better to leave it alone. |
| Survey Feedback | It makes sense to have a separate entity for planning and governance. I do not agree that student and programme administration should be separated provided there is still a personal tutor role and a UCL student support and wellbeing department. The contact for students must |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| | know the details of the programme. There is already a disconnect between registry and programmes, so why create a new layer? |
| Survey Feedback | Anyone given as a named contact to a student should be knowledgeable about the specific requirements of that programme. In the current set-up, we already see poor advice given to students when it is generic and irrelevant to the programme. This is evidenced by the fact that information on the UCL website such as videos for new students are not all-incorporating - distance learning students are often excluded or not considered. |
| Survey Feedback | In response to splitting Programme Administrator and Student Advisor roles- Yes - separate entity leads to greater fulfilment, students will welcome this and staff will be engaged in a specific function, rather than trying to cover all bases. |
| Survey Feedback | In response to splitting Programme Administrator and Student Advisor roles- Yes, with some reservations, as the huge variety of different tasks and mix of programme administration and student advisor role is what I've enjoyed most in my career life at ucl. However, looking at it purely from students point of view (and not job satisfaction point of view), it does sound like something the students could benefit from. |
| Survey Feedback | I agree with most of the ideas, but do worry slightly about how these can be achieved. I am looking forward to reading more detailed proposals. I am also aware that the main focus is on student's satisfaction, but would like to make sure that attention is also paid to job satisfaction. This is a very complex issue as we are all different and it is very difficult to please everyone. Good luck! |
| Survey Feedback | Yes the functional areas of focus programme administration, student administration and planning and governance does make sense. However, I am concerned that this rigid approach will make it more difficult for career progression within student administration and lack of diversity in the role may be discouraging for staff and those would have initially considered a career in Higher Education administration. |
| Survey Feedback | I think that it makes sense for them to be a clear contact for students to go to and having two distinct roles. I am not clear how flexible or rigid these roles would be. Also for this to work there needs to be adequate support to ensure that the whole student administration process is adequately supported. |
| Survey Feedback | No, the areas of focus described are three points of a triangle, programme administration feeds directly into student administration and planning and governance directly to programme administration. To divide these areas in this way would only serve to increase bureaucracy, especially where, assumedly each of these roles would be working across the faculty. It would seem to structure things in a way that would make it impossible for programmes to be responsive to improve the student experience and would create a series of bottlenecks to achieving change. A more logical division might be programme & student administration as a single entity and planning and governance as another, but again, the logic for this seems to be missing. |
| Survey Feedback | No, this move would only double the first points of contact for the student, and for staff, add an additional layer of bureaucracy. Logically the tasks are interdependent and to separate them doesn't seem to make any sense beyond reducing staffing, based on an assumption of overstaffing, by having Programme Administrators and Student Advisors working across multiple programmes - the reality is that the majority of Teaching Administrators who work across multiple degree programmes. |
| Institute of Neurology | Our teaching administrators are best placed to provide advice to our students as they have the local information and knowledge of the course organisation and content also. They are in direct contact with the course directors and module conveners. They carry out all aspects of the course administration and are therefore best placed to act as a local single contact point or respond to |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| | queries from our students for their specific course. These functions should not be decoupled and the reporting lines should not be changed. |
| Medical Physics | I am not against the split of programme admin and student advisor roles, but I would not be applicable to our department as much as some others. We have Kate, who can help stem the flow to a certain extent but I don't think making it black and white will do much good for us. |
| Medical Physics | The staff helpdesk at SRS is a good idea. Contacting SRS is a nightmare in high season and some kind of contactable person would help a great deal (if it was done well). |
| Medical Physics | I would like to see the detail in the part of faculty being 'less approving and more doing' section, as I am not sure right now what stuff they mean. FacEng do timetabling, their own exam boards.. So I am not sure how it is different, unless they mean taking it off our hands? |
| Medical Physics | Investment in Portico is good as long as it gives us admin in departments more functionality. If they will not get us access to SITS (I used to use this in BBK as a departmental admin) they need to give us more ability to change or amend things (or at least a faster way to enter what we want to change .. rather than sending an email to SRS saying 'can this person be changed to FT from PT please, then it taking 2 weeks to get done'). The more rigid a system, the more time I/we spend on the phone or emailing to correct issues. |
| Department of Economics | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? Alignment of roles in Departments and Faculties with services provided by central teams is key to the success of the organisation. Having closer links and more opportunities for networking vertically through the organisation is important but these are also needed horizontally between staff undertaking similar roles in different departments. This needs to be facilitated through both formal and informal networks. Communities of practice are an excellent step in this direction but there may be a need for additional groups with particular specialisms e.g. student support/welfare |
| Department of Economics | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? Yes. This seems like a logical split. Having specific staff in each department who are dedicated to providing support for students and can act as a single focal point for enquiries should help improve both consistency of information for students and will bring students to identify more with their home department. |
| Department of Economics | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? Yes. Students need a support and advice for a broad range of issues. Having dedicated roles which are designed to deal with student queries and are able to give advice/guidance/signposting on a broad range of issues. By making a role which is dedicated to student support this allows for greater pro-active intervention which ultimately should help with student retention rates. This should give a better service to the students. In addition by splitting the roles this should also allow staff tasked with managing programme administration and record keeping to focus on their roles without feeling they have to respond to multiple student queries. |
| Department of Economics | How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? Networks and good communications both between Departments and central services and across departments and faculties are key to managing this area. At present too many departments are working in silos with little opportunity for sharing best practice (or indeed any kind of knowledge sharing). It would be very helpful if we were able to find a way to facilitate secondment opportunities, temporary job swaps, buddy schemes or job shadowing across the organisation. To work effectively these need to have an element of reciprocity or managers need to be able to draw on a bank of experienced staff to backfill any gaps created by secondments etc. |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Department of Economics | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Absolutely. Poor data systems and the need to create workaround solutions or laborious manual interventions is both inefficient and costly. That said, systems need to be sufficiently flexible to support different user needs. I would very much welcome the establishment of a more visible Portico user network to explore how functionality can best be exploited. |
| Department of Economics | Do you have any other comments or questions? I joined UCL in November 2016 and my previous University had an established Student Adviser system which worked very well. I have a keen interest in the development of student data systems and would be interested to get involved with any development to Portico. I have also seen good examples of how bringing together staff from across an organisation into common interest groups can help promote good practice and knowledge sharing between departments and faculties. |
| Survey Feedback | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? Yes, because there would be more consistency across departments, faculties and central teams, with more straightforward processes which would improve co-operation and collaboration. |
| Survey Feedback | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? I believe so, although it will depend on how changes are implemented. |
| Survey Feedback | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? In principle I do, however in departments where the TAs are in a job-share role it may not be feasible as it wouldn't be possible to have one part-time programme administrator for half the time and one student advisor for the other half. Both roles need to be provided to students and academics at all times. |
| Survey Feedback | How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? I think a degree of flexibility needs to be guaranteed so that Faculties can adapt processes/roles to the needs of individual departments and disciplines while still ensuring consistency. |
| Survey Feedback | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Absolutely. An improved/more efficient student records management system, with fewer (or none!) glitches is vital to deliver programme administration and student support efficiently and effectively, and eliminate delays/mistakes, which frustrate students and staff, and reduce unnecessary staff overload. |
| MAPS | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? The idea of communities of practice is a good one, providing that the direction of travel is bottom up rather than top down. It is essential that this is driven by the people within the communities as they can determine what is required on the ground. They can adapt and change as and when needed. They could be a force for good but managed incorrectly or used for a perceived covert purpose then people will remain cynical and sceptical of their worth. That is when you will get non-compliance. |
| MAPS | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? No absolutely not. Separating out these areas is not right. Teaching administrators and those supporting teaching are generalists and RE able to deal with all these areas. Students want one point of contact and one point of contact only. How this will facilitate the student experience or help career development remains a mystery to me. |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| MAPS | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? Absolutely not. Again trained and experienced teaching administrators are able to do this. It is essential that the different areas are all interconnected to provide a holistic approach for the students. Also this does not take into account the role of the personal tutor (an academic) in all this. Another layer of bureaucracy will only make the organisation more obese and decrease effectiveness and efficiency. |
| MAPS | How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? Ultimately, students here are left, right and centre. They don't care about faculties, they care about departments, the care about their degrees. It is no coincidence that the departments that consistency score high in NSS and PTES are those that promote the sense of community and togetherness. Faculties should look to these departments to see what can be imported to other departments and then promote these as best practice. |
| MAPS | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Absolutely. Without a doubt this is the single biggest change that is required and a significant investment must and should be made here. This is where the onus of the review should have been placed and not on the individuals trying to manage systems that are not fit for purpose. |
| SHS / A&H | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? The key is to ensure local teams are allowed to work, and then that Faculty support is managed effectively. It's unclear at this point how proposals will work in practice. |
| SHS / A&H | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? Yes, but they are interconnected (see q3) |
| SHS / A&H | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? We tried this in my last place of employment, but found that these roles have different periods of intensity across the year, meaning staff could only really have challenging and rewarding jobs if they could combine elements of different tasks. In my department we have the balance right and ALL students ALWAYS have access to administrative and pastoral support. It will vary across the university, but in my department please don't try to fix something that isn't broken. And please keep local teams in place where they work effectively. |
| SHS / A&H | How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? At an institution as complex and large as UCL it will be hard to have complete consistency and uniformity. I have no doubt that much work will be needed in some Faculties, but in SHS, or at least in my area, the local systems work well, and just need better support systems in place centrally or at Faculty level. |
| SHS / A&H | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Yes absolutely. If the systems worked properly, huge efficiencies could result. |
| SHS / A&H | Do you have any other comments or questions? I have seen administrative restructuring at several other UK HEIs. I have yet to see a reorganisation that centralises PS teams end without major upset. With TEF and NSS issues already at UCL it is imperative we keep local teams and trust departments where they work well. |
| Survey Feedback | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? Yes I can see that these would be beneficial, and more collaboration can only be a good thing, but we need structured examples - i.e. the change in module codes, the effect will be HUGE on TAs who then need to recode booklets, websites etc. When asked about that central teams said 'we will help where we can' - |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| | OK, but what we need are resources and someone to make the changes for us, it just won't happen. |
| Survey Feedback | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? Yes I can see the logic, but you are taking away from the varied TA role, which some of us really enjoy. I like the fact that I can go from drafting the aser, to meeting with a student in difficulties and advising them, attending and contributing to teaching meetings to work on strategy etc. If I could only do one of those aspects, my job would be a lot less enjoyable. |
| Survey Feedback | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? No - for the reasons I have stated. I like the variation in my job, one of the saddest things we have had is the loss of departments - we have moved to one large teaching office which in principle is fine, but the students don't say 'hi' on their way to lectures anymore like they used to be able to in a department. That is why they feel lost and not connected. There is no money to hold regular social events (in our division we are allowed £2 in year 1 and £2 in the final year for student parties - £4 in their entire degree!!!). I want to have more to do with the students, but I also want to maintain my role of meeting, supporting and working with the academics. It's what makes the TA role attractive and enjoyable - that it is varied |
| Survey Feedback | How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? Regular meetings with Faculty staff, an understanding from both sides of what pressures they get at certain times of the year. I don't know that the Faculty are best placed to manage local teams. |
| Survey Feedback | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Of course - systems need improving. So much information is available but held in different systems with no links to each other - it is incredibly frustrating. |
| Survey Feedback | Do you have any other comments or questions? If there is any chance large teams can be re-embedded into departments, so that there is a TA and support for the students within academic departments, I think that would be preferable. I don't understand how there are now so many different roles across UCL. Senior Teaching Administrators - what are they compared to me (I don't have Senior in my title!) - What grade are they, are they doing the same job as me but with a 'better' title. There is a lack of recognition for when TAs go above and beyond their role. In our office alone there are a lot of variations of what TAs are expected to do from their academics, and yet we are all the same grade. |
| Population Health | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? I think it will definitely facility collaboration between departments and faculties, as I can see the Faculty being more engaged with departments. Hopefully that will translate into better collaboration and communication with central teams. |
| Population Health | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? It feels right to me as a teaching administrator. Our jobs are way too broad and we cover too many areas which definitely need to be reviewed. The proposed structure is one possibility. I am a bit concern about how the new structure would impact the student experience. At the moment, students have an opportunity to bond with their administrators from the time they apply to UCL. That same person is with them throughout their studies until they graduate and beyond. I think that having administrators in each programme who get to know students well is really important to ensure the best student experience. |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Population Health | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? It really depends on whether student advisors are working at department/faculty level or centrally. I don't propose a Centrally managed advisors roles, as I have seen this structure in other universities and it really doesn't work. If student advisory roles are working hand to hand with programme administrators, then yes, it could work. |
| Population Health | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Absolutely no doubt that the current systems don't help students or administrators and that significant investment is needed to make them work for us. |
| Population Health | Do you have any other comments or questions? I am rather excited with this project, as I truly believe it is much needed at UCL. |
| Engineering Science | <p>Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? A lot of the ideas in the document are sound and feel like common sense. In particular: -The “major programme of process redesign” is much needed, as so much of our time in departments is taken up both with mitigating badly designed processes and dealing with the impact of these processes on students. Processes need to be clearer and more auditable, with fewer ‘approval bottlenecks’. -The idea that Faculties should take more ownership of education administration is crucial – and in fact ownership of key processes could be devolved even further to departments. A key example is student record keeping. At the moment the operational side of student record keeping (i.e. updating and managing SITS) is almost entirely ‘owned’ centrally by SRS. This causes a number of problems: i) the workload involved in managing this process for 40,000 students is too high for the current SRS team to manage; ii) UCL’s complex, devolved structure (with many local variations/derogations) is too complex to be managed by a central team without the necessary local knowledge/experience; iii) the departmental/ faculty administrators (as the first port of call for students affected by problems with their record) are unable to resolve issues ‘there and then’ causing frustration for students and administrators alike. These matters could be resolved through greater devolution of ownership and through the transformation of central services from ‘operational’ to ‘coordinating’ roles – providing greater support/guidance, templates, leading process fixes & communities of practice, etc. -Tied to the above... A Staff Service Desk for SRS, with SLAs in place (as with the ISD) is crucial and badly needed. (Ditto Estates but that’s a separate story). Also more ‘update’ communication on basic matters. For example in Summer 2017, the first point at which UG TLA/STLA became aware that marks had been released on Portico was when students started asking queries – there should have been some warning from SRS. In Sept 2017 there was no communication between central SRS and departments about the timing/format of enrolment events for new UGs – the only source of information was the student-facing website – repeated queries to the advertised email address went unanswered. As a result it was (and is) very difficult to coordinate departmental activities to align with centrally organised activities. -More opportunities for staff to network/share good practice across departments and faculties are needed. The FES TLA network is a good example and could be strengthened. More formal ‘team meetings’/briefings for (for e.g.) STLAs across a whole faculty would help coordination of activities. -The emphasis on staff still being physically located in departments is very welcome – this is crucial in building a sense of institutional belonging (for staff and students alike). One point not addressed, which would help immeasurably with both communication/ collaboration and career progression, is the current proliferation of varying job titles (and gradings) across UCL. Even within FES there is a lot of inconsistency around this. Consistent job titles and descriptions would make it easier to identify key contacts in other departments (e.g. when cross-dept communication is needed) and career progression (i.e. by identifying which roles are ‘natural’ progression points for which other roles). For the latter, job descriptions could be a bit clearer on this (e.g. could state “this role would be a good progression opportunity for someone working in role X currently...” – or similar).</p> |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Engineering Science | <p>Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? The separation of ‘programme administration’ and ‘student administration’ functional areas feels like an artificial division, as so much of the latter is informed by the former. E.g. helping a student navigate the complexities of module selection, assessment and examination procedures is done very effectively at the moment by staff members responsible for supporting/administering those procedures (what the consultation document refers to as ‘programme support’) and detaching these roles would create an additional layer of administration from a student point of view. (I.e. student goes to student administrator with query, student administrator checks with programme administrator, then feeds back query to student). There might be a case for introducing non-academic student advisor roles in addition to the current Teaching & Learning Administrators, to supplement the person tutor system and provide additional pastoral support and signposting (e.g. for mental health support services) but very clear thought would need to be given to how the distinct roles would be advertised to students to avoid confusion. The implication in the consultation document is that Programme Administrators would not be student facing roles – this would have an impact on job satisfaction (a key driver of job satisfaction in Education Administration is direct student administration and the feeling of having ‘made a difference’ on an individual level). It is interesting that on page 2 the positive response to the proposed student adviser role is highlighted (“that’s the job I’d love to do but I just have too much administration to do”). It is telling that there is no equivalent example provided for the programme administrator role and I suspect this role would be regarded as less fulfilling. Further specialisation of T&L Admin roles into ‘programme administration’ and ‘student administration’ may not be conducive to career development (the current ‘generalist’ configuration of Grade 5/6/7 T&L Admin roles enables a wide range of career progression options – either as generalists – dept/faculty managers – or specialists – in education administration, quality assurance, student support etc). Governance and Planning is currently quite separate from the dept-based T&L Admin roles, and it makes sense that this activity still be based ‘centrally’ but more opportunities for dept-based administrators to be informed of developments in this area would be good. (The recent briefings on the Academic Model project, focussing not just on implementation but context, background etc. are a case in point of how to do this well – more of this across the board please!)</p> |
| Engineering Science | <p>Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? No, for the reasons outlined above. I would also like to note (on a personal level) that I have worked at two HEIs before joining UCL where a student administration/programme administration ‘split’ had been implemented as part of a restructure within the preceding c.5 years; and at both HEIs, whilst I was there, a subsequent restructure had to take place, either to mitigate against the difficulties in communication caused by the split, or to abandon the split altogether and revert back to a combined student/programme administrator role.</p> |
| Engineering Science | <p>How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? As paradoxical as it may sound, the way to foster greater consistency is to devolve more of the operational side of administration to faculties and departments, and focus efforts on ‘regulating’ that administration better (through process fixes, better training and development, better communication and briefing). By attempting to run a highly centralised model of administration (as at present) the risk is that failures lead to a plethora of local systems being developed inconsistently as workarounds. At present, the volume of ‘workaround’ administration taking place in departments is very high and detracts from the amount of time that departmental T&L administrators are able to devote to supporting students (face to face meetings, working on individual cases etc.) Departmental T&L Administrators would be able to provide a better service to students if they had to spend less time on such work, and if they were better supported by central services providing more training and liaising/communicating more clearly with departmental counterparts. (At present, central services spend too much time on ‘operational’ matters to be able to provide this – a sort of ‘can’t see the wood for trees’ situation). Strong strategic leadership, both administrative (to ensure expected standards are met and processes followed) and academic (both to ensure compliance and</p> |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| | reduce the number of local variations) would also support the above. (That's not to say it doesn't already exist in places, just to emphasise its importance). |
| Engineering Science | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? YES – this should be a priority regardless of the TOPS programme as in its current configuration Portico is not fit for purpose. However, investment in systems should not been treated 'in isolation' but should be accompanied by fundamental re-thinking of the way those systems are used (the 'ownership' referred to above and in the consultation document). |
| MAPS | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? No. Making the departmental roles more specialised will decrease student experience as there will be no staff at the departmental level who have an overview of processes. |
| MAPS | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? I think that there should be more roles at the departmental level requiring skills in more than one functional area. |
| MAPS | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? No. Student advisors should have at least some knowledge of programme administration as students mostly seek the advice on issues related to programme admin. |
| MAPS | How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? There is a need for clear job descriptions and all staff (departmental and faculty) should be held accountable if they fail to deliver. The line management structure should be clear to all professional services and each faculty team should have a list of all members of staff and their contact details distributed to the relevant professional services staff working at the departmental level. Generic mailboxes seem to serve no purpose. |
| MAPS | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Yes and in addition it would be very useful if portico and moodle could talk in two directions and sync portico with j-es. |
| MAPS | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? Yes ... though I would have concerns about possible removal of the checks and balances provided by the current two-tier Department-Faculty structure being removed. Good governance requires day to day administration overseen by Faculty scrutiny. Merging the two would need consideration to ensure this governance was still present. |
| MAPS | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? I'm still unclear as to how this would operate in practice. |
| MAPS | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? Whilst in principle this is a good idea ... it is unclear how the division would work in practice, whether the staff acting as student advisors would be sufficiently senior and trained to undertake tasks themselves or would be junior staff simply signposting student elsewhere (in which case to have one such person in each academic unit would seem costly) or how this role would overlap with personal and programme tutors. |
| MAPS | How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? By continuing the work being undertaken (Academic Model Project, updating of the Academic Manual, investment in SITS/Portico) to provide a strategic framework, systems and policies within which individuals departments can operate to satisfy local needs ... whilst also adhering to mandatory requirements. |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| MAPS | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Of course! |
| MAPS | Positives 1. Acknowledgement that staff team sizes and roles vary across UCL and the workload inequalities this generates. This is a key element in enhancing the Student Experience and being able to provide good administrative support to academics. 2. Acknowledgement that student-facing teams in faculties and departments are 'typically overloaded'. 3. Acknowledgement that Portico is not yet fit for purpose. 4. Idea of Staff Service Desk. Queries on ideas 1. If it is accepted that student-facing teams in faculties and departments are 'typically overloaded', what metrics are being used to decide the best level of staff: student: course for teaching administration? 2. Will resources be reallocated across UCL to ensure service levels are equitable? 3. How would the proposed student adviser role work? 4. What would be their overlap with Personal Tutors? 5. Who would they report to? 6. Would these roles remain separate to Programme Administrators in smaller departments? 7. Who would fund the role? 8. How would the full review be phased and funded? 9. What would the Faculty layer plan for this area look like? 10. How would timetabling etc. be managed at the Faculty layer given the peaks and troughs of the student lifecycle? 11. How will career pathways for Teaching Administrators be improved by this new model? 12. Given current issues with Registry, do they have the capacity to deal with these changes? 13. What service model will be adopted to bring together operation of transactional tasks? Where would this sit? Who would line manage the staff involved? 14. What are the risks of doing nothing? 15. What are the projected costs of implementing these ideas both in terms of systems and staffing? |
| Survey Feedback | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? I don't think that splitting activities from the current TA role across multiple roles at faculty level will be very helpful - there will no longer be a single point of contact and staff and students will have several people to go to for their concerns. If staff are aligned to more specialist areas in depts., faculties and central teams such that their activities overlap less, it's hard to see how they will work better together. |
| Survey Feedback | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? This proposal goes against the idea of having a single point of contact which most staff and students find much more helpful - instead of one person to go to, they will now have multiple contacts causing more confusion and less ownership of problems across different functional areas. Teaching Administrators (TAs) currently have broad knowledge of issues in all of these different areas, which is crucial for being able to link aspects together and provide a unified service and response to problems. |
| Survey Feedback | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? The creation of additional student advisor roles, who have the appropriate training in mental health issues and counselling would be an invaluable addition to departments alongside TAs. The TA role, in its current form, is still essential for providing advice re aspects of the course itself and registration etc., as well as the practical management of programmes, organising events, organising and servicing teaching committees etc. |
| Survey Feedback | How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? The TA forum already exists for this purpose and I believe it works very well in this respect. |
| Biosciences | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? Not particularly; we (Biosciences teaching/education admin. staff) co-operate with the Faculty (Life Sciences) and central teams in any case. |
| Biosciences | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? No, not really. The three areas don't emerge clearly from the pdf document. My own role, teaching/education administrator in the |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| | <p>Division of Biosciences would not fall under any of the suggested roles, as the majority of it consists of administration at module level.</p> |
| Biosciences | <p>Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? No. This does not appear to me to be possible, even if desirable (which I would doubt). The whole document seems very contradictory. It mentions a "single point of contact" for students, for both "academic and welfare support". At first I assumed this would mean the student's personal tutor, but that would be far too large a demand for personal tutors. Then later in the document it states that student advisers would work alongside personal tutors. It became apparent that student advisers (spelt the English way in the pdf document but the American way here) were supposed to be administrative staff, rather than academic staff, and that they would provide "first-line mental health support"! Surely this is ill advised, and could be dangerous and lead to all sorts of problems (possibly resulting in law suits for UCL). As administrators we have always be informed that we must not give students any advice that could be said to fall into the category of pastoral care, mental health or anything regarding any type of ill health. We are told to direct the student to their personal tutor (or programme/year tutor). Surely to provide mental health support one would need to be a medical professional (with relevant training, qualifications and experience)? One would expect that students would go to health care professional, such as GPs or community health care teams if they had mental health problems. As it is, we make students aware of Student Psychological Services, Student Disability Services, and the Union Rights and Advice service. The suggested role is not an administrator role. My personal role as teaching/education administrator is mainly concerned with administration at module level, rather than programme level, so would not fit into this suggested plan. Some programmes do not own any modules, so the administrators for those programmes have a very different set of tasks from those of us who look after modules. Also, it is not at all clear whether such a change would improve/provide career pathways; I can't see how this would be any different to the current system.</p> |
| Biosciences | <p>How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? The pdf document is very contradictory, as throughout it talks of creating "consistent systems and processes" but then goes on to say that faculties could have scope to make "their own decisions" and "manage their own administration". The aim for administration across UCL to be "consistent and coherent" is incompatible with giving faculties "greater ownership of the management of education administration".</p> |
| Biosciences | <p>Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? If Portico continues to be used, then yes it definitely needs significant investment and improvement. There are numerous glitches that need to be ironed out. It should be able to cope more easily with students who don't fit the standard pattern of progression, e.g. if they interrupt their studies etc. There really needs to be a downloadable "report" that can be used at exam boards across UCL that provides details of students' marks across all their years of study, including year averages across ALL modules taken, as well as just those used for the final degree classification (i.e. the best ones for the lower years only); this should be user-friendly, and show ranking. Registry have been saying for a couple of years that this would happen, but I don't know when this would be. At the moment departments need to create something of their own, so there is no consistency across UCL. Because of rounding of marks, and the different ways this is treated across UCL, students are not treated consistently. Even within the Division of Biosciences members of staff deal with rounding differently, e.g. in the case of module marks where there are several components within a module. Only whole integers can be entered into Portico for module components, and any mark ending in .5 or above would round to the next number. However, some tutors have their own mark sheet and work out the module mark using component marks which are not rounded, and then if their final mark is different from the Portico final mark they will manually alter the Portico final mark in order to make it more "accurate".</p> |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Biosciences | <p>Do you have any other comments or questions? The document seems to approve the idea of "a single point of contact" for students, but in reality it is suggesting more points of contact, i.e. a minimum of four (personal tutor, programme/year tutor, student adviser, and programme administrator). Some of the administrative roles that it suggested should move to Faculty level do not seem at all workable, especially timetabling and examination boards. Surely these need to be run at "departmental" level? Module administrators spend considerable percentages of their time in relation to timetabling (including room bookings, CMIS, Lecture cast etc.); it would not be feasible for this to be done at faculty level - it would be far too demanding (probably impossible time-wide) and soul-destroying for one person! There are far too many programmes within the Division of Biosciences for the Faculty to have to deal with all the aspects of the examination boards. Finally, in Section 4. of the pdf document, entitled "What would not change", it states that there will still be "support staff physically located next to academics and students", to reinforce a student's "departmental home" and help students to feel they "belong" at UCL. In fact that WOULD be a change for the Division of Biosciences. When the Division was created (for administrative purposes) and different "research departments" created within it (with some bearing on old departments) for research purposes, there was a huge restructuring. Support staff became divisional, rather than departmental. For teaching/education administration this mean we (administrators) were moved from out locations within departments, to one central location (in the Medawar Building), which is neither next to academics nor students (other than there being random academics who happen to be based in the same building, and the fact that there are two lecture theatres in the same corridor). I would contend that this change, which happened in August 2009, is indeed one reason students may no longer feel they "belong" or have a "departmental home". Many administrators and academic staff were against this change at the time. It was said that because all teaching/education administrators would be gathered together in one location that they would be more easily able to cover for each other, but in reality we don't know each other's jobs on the whole and have to pass things to the person concerned. It has meant that we have to spend half a day a week on reception duty, which for those of us, like me, who are 0.8 FT means an eighth of our week, receiving coursework, handing back marked work, trying to answer queries etc. Prior to the reorganization, students on the programmes within our departments, or on modules run by our departments, would have come to our own offices; we would have been nearer to academic staff and thus had more contact with them. I'm sure students felt they belonged to a department much more then than they do now!</p> |
| Engineering Science | <p>Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? Broadly speaking, yes. However, why do Faculties need to manage and coordinate programme admin and student support teams in departments? This could be a source of friction and tension rather than collaboration.</p> |
| Engineering Science | <p>Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? Probably but I am concerned that roles which are too focussed will result in the loss of very skilled people who prefer broader, more varied roles.</p> |
| Engineering Science | <p>Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? No. The two are intrinsically linked. Part of the appeal of programme administration roles currently is the variety of tasks and the ability to work with students first hand.</p> |
| Engineering Science | <p>How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? This depends on what is meant by the term faculties? Is this being used to refer to academic units generally? If it means Faculties in the UCL sense, then I have concerns as to why Faculties need to configure these teams and what freedom departments will have to run and manage their own programme and student administration.</p> |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Engineering Science | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Yes, in my opinion, the issue here is not the people factor but the systems and processes we are forced to work with. This is well known and has been for several years. Improving systems will automatically improve many of the other aspects that TOPS is striving to achieve, such as freeing up time for professional development, greater job satisfaction, less time wasted or duplicated. |
| Engineering Science | Do you have any other comments or questions? I like the idea of Faculties having greater approval powers for many processes. This would surely make things happen quicker and result in an improved staff and student experience. What is meant by Faculty managing timetabling? I think this should be for departments to manage their own timetabling. The proposed increase responsibilities of Faculties needs to be very well thought through as not all departments within a Faculty have the same needs and so standardised Faculty-level approaches may not always be appropriate. How much autonomy will departments have? Why do Faculty need to manage student support teams deployed in departments? Making basic tasks easy is great and the simplification of so-called transactional tasks is needed. How exactly is "workload relief" intended to be rolled out for professional services staff? I'm pleased to see the term "heroic" used to refer to the excellent work so many teaching and learning administrators are currently doing! |
| MAPS | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? No – Student advisors and programme administrators are not roles that can exist exclusively. Student advisors will essentially have to know a large proportion of programme administration, in order to effectively answer student's questions. This would be difficult for them to know, without having worked through the processes themselves. Co-ordination by the faculty would likely mean a loss of discipline specific practice/support – basing teams in the department does not fix that, it just means that the staff based in departments will have less contact and support from their managers. |
| MAPS | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? No – Programme and Student Administration should be one functional area. See above. |
| MAPS | How can we foster greater consistency and collaboration in this area whilst still ensuring that faculties are able to configure teams which reflect the contexts in which they operate, and the needs of particular disciplines? Empower faculties as suggested, as many processes are automatic – consistency already exists, it's usually timescales that let things down. Rely less on central teams – that's the bottle neck... Alternatively, provide a sufficient number of staff in central teams. |
| MAPS | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Yes – emphasis on 'continued'. The issue we've had previously is that money runs out. |
| MAPS | Do you consider that our ideas will facilitate greater collaboration and co-operation across departmental, faculty and central teams? Why / why not? Generally yes. Students and teachers need more support and simpler processes ON THE GROUND. It is crucial that professional services staff are in Departments where they are visible, and humanise the enormous institution that is UCL. |
| MAPS | Does the concept of three functional areas of focus – programme administration; student administration; planning and governance – feel right to you? Yes, it seems ok, but I would defer to what the professional services staff on the ground say. |
| MAPS | Do you support the principle of making programme administration roles distinct from student advisor roles? Why / why not? Yes, if that means that student advising gets more attention. However, it is crucial that students continue to feel that their ACADEMIC tutors are also mentors, who care about them as people, not just one more face in a lecture theatre. I think academic |

| | |
|----------|---|
| | staff need to maintain this role, although there is no doubt space for specialised advice given the complexity of many students' needs. |
| MAPS | Do you agree that we should prioritise continued, significant investment in Portico and other associated systems? Yes. Systems are very clunky and don't talk to each other, causing significant friction for academic staff and an at times very high burden on professional services staff. |
| MAPS | The professional staff are over-stretched but excellent in the department. But what makes their work efficient is constant and close local contact with department. Support this departmental work. Cut if necessary faculty, school and higher level admin. |
| Bartlett | Two functional areas: This was not thought sensible. It was thought best for students to see one person who covers both areas and who has all knowledge of the students and their issues. It was not clear whether the student advisor roles would be departmental or faculty in this proposal or exactly what the student advisor role would involve. |
| Bartlett | Staff in faculties: We already have a lot of these activities centralized within our faculty office and can see the value, but not at all with timetabling which needs to remain local, at departmental level (though we have an element of coordination of timetabling work in the faculty team). Concern that the teams would be led by the Faculty Directors of Education and Student Experience and therefore this key element of administration not led by the Faculty Manager as with all other services (unless that role reports to the Faculty Manager). |
| Bartlett | SRS staff: Staff service desk idea welcomed. We are not sure why SRS staff would necessarily be leaders of the communities of practice. |
| Bartlett | Transactional processes: Concern about having one general phone number – it would be preferred to go through to teams immediately. Noted that there is little use of hard copy feedback forms. |
| Bartlett | Systems: handling SEQs through Portico would be welcomed; would prefer to see 'student view' of Portico and to be able to add 'free text' to student records on Portico. |
| Bartlett | Tool for capturing interactions with students: This was welcomed but would need to be integrated with emails to work fully. |
| Bartlett | Benefits: personal services for students – noted that departmental 'home' is an important part of this; consistency – the faculty has a lot of consistency in student administration roles, probably more so than others. |
| Bartlett | Better understanding of what the student advisor role involves and whether there would be any training provided for it. |
| Bartlett | In general it's agreed that the role of student advisor is currently interlinked with that of programme administrator and should not be separated. |
| Bartlett | There are benefits in the decentralisation of some registry services to Faculty (i.e. mini-registry at Faculty level) as this could improve administrative processes as less time would be spent on chasing up registry or trying to find information if Faculty was the first point of call. |
| Bartlett | Overall there should be investment in Portico and also the provision of Portico documentation (to be kept up to date with changes) and improved training on using these systems. |
| Bartlett | Timetabling should remain at departmental level. |
| Bartlett | Increased visibility of registry staff on webpages - currently very hard to get hold of them or find contact details on the registry webpage. |

| | |
|----------|--|
| Bartlett | Request for registry to share information that is sent out to students with departmental staff. |
| Bartlett | Improved communication and accessibility of resources from registry services. |
| Bartlett | Student experience role- Staff wanted more information about this and how it sits alongside the personal tutor & departmental tutor roles. They were not sure what this would add if the person could not give the programme specific context to advice as the programmes support was being done by someone else. Common training delivered to programme administrators and time build into their JDs to support students, but with clear lines on when to refer to an academic would be the best solution according to both PS and academic staff who were consulted. |
| Bartlett | Field Trips- Field trips are an area that cause a very high work load locally on an annual basis. PS staff suggested this could be centralised since it is done by multiple departments in the same way (geography & anthropology have been consulted on process & academic interaction with PS staff). Academic staff consulted felt that their relationship with local T&L staff meant that they felt better supported for their bespoke trips, however local T&L staff confirmed that temporary workers undertake this (with it being a short-term extra work need), so the work was not being done by the staff the academics had the relationship with. This is identified as an area that would benefit from a central strategic view and new process planning by all three DMs spoken to – albeit briefly (architecture, archaeology & geography). The duty of care for students going abroad is unclear to staff, whilst there is no legal requirement due to age of students, it is felt there is a moral and social requirement and therefore central UCL needs to give guidance as reputational risk for things going wrong would stand at institutional level. |
| Bartlett | Organisation of PS support- Our team of administrators is organised so that they provide dedicated support to certain programmes; both administrative ‘teaching and learning’ support to programme directors and ‘first point of call’ advice to students. The latter consists of personal tutor type signposting to SRS and other welfare services, with one member of staff having a dedicated disability co-ordinator role. This works well; we provide a triage service for programme directors and students’ issues are usually resolved by one member of professional services (who may coordinate with programme director, faculty staff, SRS staff) to provide a swift solution and excellent customer service. |
| Bartlett | Often students’ individual circumstances give rise to problems with performance, attendance etc, and having a complete overview of the students’ situation means that PS staff can advise their programme directors on the complete picture. In addition to providing a quality service to students, this mix of roles allows for variety within the job and for highly satisfied staff. The variety within the remit keeps the role dynamic and gives a customer-facing role to all within our team. Our team is clear that it does not want to see a separation of ‘T&L’ and ‘First point of contact’ roles, whilst recognising that this might suit some departments that organise their teams differently. We interpret that the division suggested would see students having ‘two points of contact’; one member of PS staff for curricular-related issues and a second for all other issues. |
| Bartlett | We suggest that all tasks to be undertaken by PS support are clearly defined in the TOPS, to describe the tasks within the three distinct streams identified: T&L, student advice and planning & governance. In this way departments can ensure that all necessary tasks are covered whilst allowing flexibility for local working practices. |
| Bartlett | Timetabling - With regard to timetabling at Faculty level, this seems too large an undertaking for one person or a small team. Timetabling often relies on local knowledge, for example, the way that a module is taught (lectures, seminars or a mix/type of layout required for studio-based teaching). A team based in Faculty would have to liaise very closely with departmental PS and academic colleagues creating a volume of correspondence; there doesn’t seem to be any benefit to organising timetabling in this way. |
| Bartlett | Devolution of processes to Faculty- We can see several benefits to faculty teams being able to process changes to student status/modules/marks. At present students are often having to wait |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| | for a long time for these transactions to show up on Portico which can cause delays in student loans, progression status etc. |
| Bartlett | This should speed things up and relieve some pressure from SRS staff. |
| Bartlett | Director of Student Experience and Faculty Tutor roles- It's unclear how these two roles will dovetail. The Bartlett already has a Student Experience Officer but their role is associated with enriching the experience of studying at UCL, rather than supporting students when things go wrong for them. |
| Bartlett | Feedback on TOPS Education stream from BSP Academic staff - It doesn't make any sense to split up the programme administrator roles into separate student advisors, as the strength of the BSP admin team is that they know the programmes inside out so know how best to advise the students. NG explained that the ideas have probably emerged from some departments who have very little student support. As departments are so varied, the department should have the freedom to decide which responsibilities lie within each role. Some professional services staff feel that they get bogged down with programme admin and therefore don't have enough time to support students, but a large reason for this is because the systems don't work very well and therefore the programme admin takes more time than it should. If the systems worked were improved there would be a better balance within the roles. There are times in the year where there are lots of students around that may need advice and times where there is no one around so the workload for a student advisor could be incredibly variable. Agreed that the personal advice for students is often linked directly to the programme so makes sense that one role should be able to advise on both. There is a concern in some departments where the administrators do not see the students and are in a different building to academics, but that this is not the case in BSP so does not apply in the same way. There is a danger of creating too many 'advisors' who are constantly having to consult with other people rather than acting directly – eg. The student advisor is meant to be the first point of contact for students but if the student's query is related to the programme the student advisor will then have to check with the programme administrator rather than knowing how to advise them. It was also pointed out that this could also create an extra layer of confusion between the student advisor and the personal tutor. |
| Bartlett | On the issue of tasks such as timetabling being moved from department level to faculty level, staff stated that they thought this would be a bad idea as in order to timetable efficiently, the needs of the students and programme need to be clear and this would be a lot to coordinate at faculty level. |
| Bartlett | The idea is to replace the Faculty Tutor with Director of Student Experience, which implies that this will now be a 100% professional services role. Concerns around this were expressed and it was unsure why the suggestion has been raised, as UCL would have to change the charter to do so. Concerns were raised about the lack of academic value in the Faculty Tutor role, commenting that the change of the title to 'Student Experience' changes the focus, and questioned who will take over the other pastoral demands of the Faculty Tutor role. |
| Bartlett | TOPS emerging ideas were presented in the UR term meeting and students reported that they could not see the reasoning of splitting the roles in two, and keeping the student advisor function contained within the programme administrator role seemed more reasonable. |
| Bartlett | The MPlan representatives felt that the BSP administrative system is a model that should be followed by other departments rather than having another system imposed onto the School. |
| Bartlett | Undergraduate students reported that the undergraduate administrator has been very helpful to them, and it has been beneficial to them to have her as their one point of contact. They commented that they were not sure what noticeable improvement separating the two roles would make as the current model makes sense and work well. |
| Population Health | The TOPS summary for this professional service feels quite 'top down'. There needs to be a feedback loop so departmental experience is pushed back up first hand or it will be too |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| | hierarchical. On the face of it the departmental contribution to developing practice/strategy isn't clear. |
| Population Health | Not sure. Programme and student administration are very interlinked and I struggle to imagine them separated out in practice. I would like to see what the two job roles will look like on paper and how they will be delineated and facilitated through existing processes/systems. Whilst Teaching Administrators are overloaded and need more capacity to improve student experience, the role is very varied and interesting. TOPS might jeopardise that but more importantly I'm not convinced yet that the programme administrator role will be sufficiently freed up so we will have the desired capacity to quickly facilitate change. This role has no peaks and troughs it is all peak. |
| Population Health | I'm not sure. Taking the pastoral role out of the Teaching Administrator role is a big cultural shift. On describing this to a Professor she commented that it might not be clear to students who to go to. For the student advisor role to be embraced and used daily by students, they would have to be promoted at induction, lead local career events and run mental health activities. Would students still go to their Programme Administrator with academic issues (which might have an underlying personal/health issue)? I presume there would be liaison between the two roles around student performance/concern. The Student Advisor, if covering careers, would need to liaise with the Programme Administrator about the student profile and programme content, to plan career activity. Whilst I read in the TOPs summary that students want one point of contact to support them with problems and extra-curricular activities, I'm concerned that some existing teaching administrators might be 'designed out' of the student advisor role. What would the student adviser Person Specification be? Will opportunities to develop into that role be available for those who want it? The student advisor contact hours will need to reflect the teaching activity of the department/faculty so the student advisor is accessible when the students need them (or they will knock on the door of the programme administrator). |
| Population Health | By ensuring Community of Practice is accessible and shares good practice at the appropriate level. Share/audit processes at local level and design out duplication where possible. Encourage meaningful contribution to developing strategy. Empower departmental staff. |
| Population Health | Yes, and test that they will actually work and support programme administration effectively. Currently, SiP (payments) forces duplication of right to work checks. These should only be done for each person once a year - I should be able to find out that a check has been done e.g. by ICH and I don't have to do it again in IGH. Ideally SiP should tell me a right to work check is already in place at Faculty or UCL level. It would be good if processing payments and Tier 4 compliance, including timesheets, could be done outside the department but the programme administrator would still have to plan hour's data that fits the SiP forms, limiting the time saved by this being processed more centrally. |
| Population Health | I thought the objective of TOPS is to increase efficiency reducing cost over time. Creating new roles in departments (student advisers) and faculties (specialists) doesn't seem to support this unless there will be less teaching administrators to create student advisers or other roles in other services will be cut. Can we be briefed about what will be happening across Professional Services? I have no idea, apart from hearing that some other services might be outsourced! It isn't clear how career progression for support staff in education will be facilitated. Currently, staff generally feel they have to move away from the coal face and leave their department in order to progress. Will this still be the case? Ideally staff could progress in their department but I feel this will never be supported. Worry that current staff will find they are downgraded (or worse). I understand people hate uncertainty and don't want this process prolonged unnecessarily but I don't want it to be rushed either or designed poorly as this would lead to more dissatisfaction. |