



A SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED ABOUT THE FINANCE 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 FINANCE SERVICES PROPOSED SERVICE DESIGN?

In addition to the original direct input to the workshop and world café sessions, feedback relating specifically to Finance Services across the various engagement channels represents **12%** 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 Finance Services these can be categorised into three key themes.

1) **Dedicated finance resources are desired but there are differing views regarding reporting lines**

The majority of feedback we have received is positive about the idea of increased dedicated financial support from central finance. While stakeholders are appreciative of the efforts of Departmental Managers in providing financial services they recognise that these individuals are rarely, if ever, specialists in finance. Therefore, delivery of financial services and in particular strategic financial guidance are welcomed by most. However, some questions have been raised regarding the idea of locally based financial staff reporting to central Finance. Some of the feedback comments include that this could lead to central Finance exerting control over Departments and the loss of local expertise.

2) **Professional development is seen as an extremely important enabler for improvements in Finance**

As identified in the first theme, UCL stakeholders appreciate that Departmental Managers are not financial specialists but believe a shortage of professional development has played a big part in the challenges experienced

with Financial Services. As a result, there is advocacy for improved professional development to enable the improvement of financial operations at a local level.

3) Questions have been raised about how the accountability frameworks, that will enable Faculties to hold the centre to account, would work

UCL colleagues have questioned the accountability framework that would ensure that both the department can hold local Finance Services to account and that they themselves can be held accountable for Finances when the service is managed centrally. A suggestion that has been received from three members of the UCL community is a dual reporting line with direct local reporting and indirect or dotted line reporting into either faculty or central level Finance team.

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