

TRANSFORMING OUR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



UCL

TRANSFORMING OUR ESTATES SERVICES TO BE CLEAR, CONSISTENT AND CUSTOMER-FOCUSSED

The Service Leadership Team for Estates Services is made up of Andrew Grainger (Director of UCL Estates), Geoff Dunk (Faculty Manager, Brain Sciences), Geoff Prudence (Director, Facilities and Infrastructure) and Sian Minett (Director, Estates Portfolio & Business Services), supported by Dave Coward (Special Projects Manager).

Estates services include all aspects of central and local activities in respect of the management of the estate building infrastructure; maintenance; cleaning; security; catering; spatial planning, management and allocation of people/activities to spatial resource; room bookings and event management; postal services; logistics; project feasibility and delivery (including minor works); property portfolio management; commercial services; environmental and safety advice and assurance; estates helpdesk; UCL switchboard etc., along with the overarching strategic and policy framework in respect of those services. At UCL, 'estates services' are undertaken by staff in the central Estates Division; other Professional Services Divisions and across faculties and departments.

The delivery of estates services is challenging in an environment as large, complex, dynamic and space constrained as UCL. The size and complexity of the UCL estate is unparalleled in the sector: the devolved departmental structure at UCL is a further complicating factor and the current Capital Programme has resulted in further short term space and management challenges. UCL continues to feel the impact of a legacy of under-investment in the physical estate and an environment where planned preventative maintenance was not a top institutional priority. The impact of rapid institutional growth and ambition has had a particularly acute impact on the estate and its services which have struggled to adequately support demand for a wide range of competing services and activities, particularly as budget pressures have increased. The Capital Programme has also placed further challenges on the estate. Collectively, this has resulted in frustrations for both service providers and users of estate services alike.

In recent years, the Professional Services Division, UCL Estates, has made significant changes in respect of estates services delivered. Integration of staff and estate management functions of the former 'satellites' took place some years ago, and other significant changes have taken place or are underway, including development and implementation of a clear Infrastructure Strategy; standard project management processes; improving communications and engagement; overhauling timetabling practices. Further changes are already planned, for example addressing customer communications and the minor works process. Many of these initiatives to provide improved and consistent services across the estates portfolio are in alignment with the overarching principles within the TOPS Programme and the priority areas identified in the Service Design workshops. It is acknowledged that there remain substantial challenges for the future effective delivery of estates services across UCL, which we want TOPS to address.

1. We have heard from a large number of colleagues regarding the issues they are facing. These include:

- There is variation in the quality of services to staff and students across departments and faculties (which may share similar core activities)
 - There is inconsistent and poorly defined roles and areas of responsibility and accountability
 - Service quality is often dependent on individual relationships or 'heroes' (in both the central service and departments)
 - Communications between Central Estates and departments/faculties has often been sub-optimal and UCL Estates has not kept the rest of UCL informed of progress and key developments
 - Services are often limited by outdated systems that do not have the capabilities to support effective processes, audit trails and feedback loops
 - Limited opportunities exist for sharing best practice and driving continuous service improvement across UCL
 - Sometimes no clear framework/pathways for career development or progression for staff (in both the central Division and departments)
 - No holistic view of all available space across the estate resulting in an inability to plan and manage space effectively
 - No holistic view of all available teaching space across the UCL – contributing to acute space pressures, an inability to plan effectively, cost pressures for 3rd party space and a poor experience for staff and students alike
 - Principles and practices in respect of space allocation and utilisation are unclear
 - Estates processes, policies and procedures are not clear and accessible
 - Business Partnering arrangements are at different stages of maturity across UCL Estates teams
 - Investment priorities in the estate are not transparent
 - Concern about value for money of minor works projects and process effectiveness
 - Teaching, research and other academic initiatives do not always take into account space capacity limitations and/or the cost of adapting/increasing space, and decision-making processes are not clearly joined up.
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2. Overview of the principles and emerging ideas

The key principles and emerging ideas are:

- The provision of an Estates Partner to work with Faculties or Departments to ensure delivery of an effective Estates service. This role may differ according to specific Faculty need but would be a 'local but central' role – embedded but reporting to the central Estates team. The support could need to include both strategic advice and support, and day-to-day delivery of smaller estates changes
 - Clearer institutional policies, for example on space management
 - An investment in communications, to support the delivery of Estates Services and a positive, engaged partnership relationship between Estates and the wider institution
 - Providing a single point for customers to be able to report faults, issues or service failures – with robust feedback mechanisms to keep customers advised of progress.
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3. What could potentially change?

We could continue our work in creating a culture of delivery that is supported by improved customer service; clear and transparent processes, collaborative working and more consistent outcomes. More effective systems and robust Management Information could underpin this. Customers should expect clear service standards measured by customer service satisfaction evaluation and KPIs.

In practice, the emerging ideas may mean:

- **How can I help you:** we could seek to review and address anomalous variations in the quality of services to staff and students across departments and faculties (which may share similar core activities). Where differences in service quality continue to exist we could make standards clear through published Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Agreements could make clear the responsibilities of all parties
- We could create clear and distinct service lines within Estates Services, where there are standardised approaches for exceptions and escalations. Staff roles within these service lines could be more clearly defined and specialised, enabling a better service to be provided to faculties requesting advice and support. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities could be made clear, along with core competencies associated with roles.
- We could seek to ensure service consistency and continuity through eliminating 'single points of failure' and reducing reliance on individual 'heroes'. This applies to departments as well as UCL Estates
- **Staff aligned to our needs:** we could expand and develop the Estates Partner model. This could become a fundamental way of delivering estate services leading to more integration of services, effective collaboration, better decision making, quicker resolution time, and the delivery of efficiencies & service improvements. This model could emphasise the role of Area FMs as the bridge between the faculties and the central service. Faculties could receive a named contact for building(s) that could help them with strategic advice and support, and drive effective decision making. They could also assist with serious or long-standing maintenance issues
- We could redefine UCL's approach to space allocation and management. As a first step this could focus on improving management information in respect of all space categorisations and utilisation, underpinned by policies, norms and a single, effective system to enable room booking on a common platform. This could allow the central service team to effectively review space allocations, improve space information and ensure there is better space utilisation. The systems required to gather the data to support this could be accessible by departmental or faculty staff, with up to date data. Departments could also benefit from improved data and system improvements, whilst institutional decision-making could be better informed
- We could create clear communications and engagement pathways between UCL Estates, estates related services and departments with effective channel management and clear communication of the service lines. These could be underpinned by defined roles and improved systems capability
- **Great careers:** we could set up Communities of Practice according to their need for Estates Services. This would help create clear career pathways to ensure we can train and retain our best performing staff. We could create training programmes to ensure our staff have the right skills needed for the roles and are supported in their development.
- **Make processes simpler:** we could ensure that policies, processes and procedures are easily accessible on a single website. We could seek to review and streamline or simplify processes, and keep them up-to-date. Where key processes or policies do not exist we could seek to document and secure approvals. We could review and simplify the process for commissioning minor works, ensuring that safety, sustainability and cost are balanced against customer requirements

- We could clarify and reinforce respective responsibilities and accountabilities for designated roles (e.g. in respect of safety and sustainability) to ensure effective partnership working across estates services
- We could align key planning and decision-making processes and practices to ensure that teaching, research and other academic initiatives always take account of the ability of the estate to support that initiative, or the totality of cost associated with refurbishment or acquisition of additional space
- **Money for systems:** we could invest in IT systems that allows the services to operate more efficiently and effectively. These system with be intelligent, user friendly and primarily self-service driven.
- **Help me to help myself through self-service:** we could look to self-service to increase the efficiency of the service, so that central staff can focus on person to person support. In particular, we have earmarked investment in replacing the CAFM system, building on occupancy sensors and improving buildings management information
- **Make basic tasks easy:** transactional, simple processes that are repeated time and again across UCL could be brought together. There is an opportunity to support one another, better manage peaks and troughs and deliver these processes through a new service model. This would accelerate and facilitate consistency and harmonisation and offer significant improvement opportunities for transactional services to make them work more efficiently and effectively repeatable

4. What would not change?

There are a number of areas which are not covered by the emerging ideas and would not change. Although not exhaustive, these include:

- Central management and control of the infrastructure and fixed assets across the estate
- Delivery of infrastructure services by Central Estates staff
- Management of hard and soft facilities management contracts by Central Estates staff
- Direction of travel in providing ‘central but local’ support.

5. The potential benefits and investment we could make

The following table details the benefits we are aiming to achieve within the estates service, as well as the investments we need to make in order to realise these benefits.

Benefits	Costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased satisfaction with the service • Improved satisfaction in staff roles • Improved compliance with legislative requirements • Greater clarity and consistency of service for all • Improved efficiency resulting in re-allocation of resources to customer facing activities • Improved sharing of information and transparency to underpin effective decision making • Improved communications, engagement and collaborative working • Reduced risk of statutory non-compliance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary staff costs to lead/deliver or support the priority workstreams listed above for one year only • investment IT systems to improve space and asset data, BIM and other management information and reporting.

Note: the costs above are estimates and have not been costed in detail.

6. What are the outstanding questions we would welcome feedback on?

1. Review, define and agree estates service requirements (with reference to budget constraints)
 2. Scope and timeframes for the review of the faculty/departmental roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
 3. Client requested minor works 'projects'.
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Disclaimer:

These documents contain emerging ideas for how UCL professional services could be delivered in a more effective way in the future. At present, no formal change proposals are being put forward by UCL and so engagement remains at an informal stage. Where a preferred option is mentioned, this pertains to PA Consulting recommendations and does not constitute a formal proposal for change by UCL.