TRANSFORMING OUR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

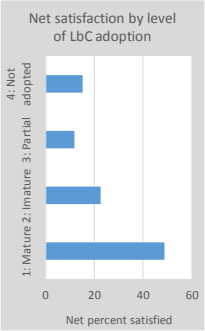
BUILDING ON THE INCREASING SUCCESS OF IT SERVICE DELIVERY ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY BY EXTENDING OUR EXISTING MODEL AND FEDERATING SERVICES FOR AN IMPROVED EXPERIENCE

The Service Leadership Team consists of Mike Cope (Director of ISD).

IT Services incorporates a broad range of IT services that are provided to staff in UCL academic departments, other professional services and VP's offices. Central staff work with local staff in departments to deliver end-to-end IT services. Most local IT staff in departments report into the central IT organisation (ISD) but some report to Faculty Managers or Departmental Administrators in local departments.

Over the past four years, academic departments representing over 80% of UCL activity have adopted the 'Local but Central' (LbC) operating model which blends locally based departmental IT staff with central teams for effective IT service delivery. This model has been designed to deliver the best of two worlds by retaining locally responsive locally-based IT teams coupled with centralised provision of common IT services (often referred to as commodity or utility IT) where appropriate. This model achieves this by:

1. **Keeping local IT staff local but within a new unified IT team under the management of a single Head of Faculty IT who reports centrally into ISD**
2. **Establishing effective academically-led local IT committees or other governance arrangements to which the local IT teams are accountable**



The Cubane service satisfaction data shows that service satisfaction is in the top quartile for areas with a mature LbC model but in the bottom quartile for areas without LbC.

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

- Many of the IT systems within UCL for HR (SIP, ROME), Finance (MY Finance) Admissions (Portico) are not as user friendly as users expect and processes are often complex and fragmented
- There is lack of clarity about "who to turn to" when certain issues arise. Staff in some departments often need to go through several teams to solve issues, which can slow response times
- The performance of services could be improved potentially by sharing best practice
- There is a fear of loss of control if the LbC model is adopted
- Effective academic engagement and representation in governance structure is critical but difficult to get right
- Traditional accounting and budgeting focussed on annual cycles doesn't support the need for long term and sustained investment especially for multi-year IT projects
- Difficulty in managing expectations of staff and students who have grown up in the age of Facebook and Google and who now expect that level of ease-of-use and reliability from all systems
- Students and staff do not always know full scope of applications available
- From a customer perspective it would be good to understand more about IT strategies
- There is potential for a greater number of secondments, assignments and apprenticeship and graduate schemes across IT in UCL.

2. Overview of the principles and emerging ideas

The key principles and emerging ideas are:

- We could have University-wide adoption of Local but Central model across UCL providing better services and lower unit costs together with published target 'service levels' for key services
- We could focus local IT teams under the LbC model on direct high value support for research and education – prior to adoption of the LbC model, local teams often spend too much time on commodity IT activities that can be delivered more efficiently at scale centrally
- We could create a new 'Google like skin' – a unified user-friendly interface across all core applications (HR, Finance, Portico) to cover the common transactions used by most staff removing the need for the vast majority of users never need to use the often clunky interface of the underlying core systems
- We could automate IT back office to reduce the number of manual steps, re-work, approvals and low-value transactional activities by standardising, simplifying and automating, especially in the IT back office
- We could drive greater levels of self-service and self-fulfilment.

3. What could potentially change?

In practice, the emerging ideas may mean:

- We could roll-out of the "Local but Central" model to remaining faculties with the aim of delivering improved access to central expertise and services, better accountabilities for delivery and opportunities for local based IT staff to invest more time in learning, teaching and research IT
- We could create a 'Federated Services' model, which could devolve a selection of services locally, so that they could be delivered at the point of highest value and dealt with in the most efficient manner, all with service level commitments
- **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. These processes could include:
    - Integrating routine transactional functions across the university into a single service desk and improve the quality of service provided. This will provide a one-stop-shop for staff and students for a range of straightforward transactions.
- **Great careers**: we could introduce more 'assignment' opportunities to enable faculty staff to develop further IT competencies by swapping "assignments" with another member of staff, including between faculty and central teams. This would develop a broader skill base within the faculties and ensure that we are developing our people's skills appropriately leading to greater job satisfaction and increased retention.
- Create further communities of practice that will ensure we are sharing best practices and developing career pathways.
- **Money for systems**: for instance, to dramatically improve Portico or develop a personalised portal "skin" to unify systems, making it a more user friendly for end users
- **Help me to help myself through self-service**: we could introduce more self-service (e.g. audio visual equipment booking, infrastructure services such as requesting storage space) to reduce the backlog and requests, and free up resource time

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

- Local support teams continuing to remain locally based providing a locally responsive that is accountable to the local department and academic community
- Specialised and department specific services continuing to be provided by local IT teams under the LbC model which continue to support local academic needs.

5. The potential benefits and investment we could make

The following table sets out the benefits we could achieve within IT services. A list of investments in IT that are required to realise these benefits has been included in other service summaries.

Benefits
Effective services: • Simpler, more effective and more efficient services • Faster resolution of issues and reduction in number of incidents, improved agility and responsiveness of IT support and simplified local support and contact channel • Specialised IT services that are delivered and managed locally in each department, where they are best understood • Access to a more structured and effective customer engagement model which ensures customer needs are understood and responded to effectively • Provide staff with the skills and abilities for the required workload. **More fulfilling careers:** • Staff, whether in technical or non-technical roles, are equipped to collaborate effectively, as well as supporting and managing others in the organisation • Greater commitment and organisational support to focus on personal development • Clarity around which skills and competency areas we need to invest in **Investment in Academic Mission:** • Increased proportion of resources focussed on the direct support of education and research • Greater use of centrally provided common shared services and more self-service freeing up staff time • Federating services across faculties and departments focuses services at the point of delivery where they add most value • Reduction in number of approval processes and transactions

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

1. Which aspects of each service should be federated to which level (School, Faculty or Department?)

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.