

Transforming our Professional Services: Fortnightly Leadership Briefing

What are we trying to achieve?

UCL's commitment to academic excellence means that our professional services - whether in departments, institutes, faculties or central services - must be empowered to support and enable excellence. The TOPS programme aims to improve professional services and deliver: more effective services and a more satisfied UCL community; more fulfilling careers for staff and; enabling greater investment in UCL's academic mission by improving value for money and efficiency in UCL's professional services. TOPS is a two year programme to kick start the delivery of our stated aims.

Priority updates

As we progress through the design phase, we are collating the early outputs whilst also setting up the second wave of service design workstreams.

- The design phase will help us imagine simpler and more efficient ways of delivering our services.
- The early outputs from the design phase have been collated and will be discussed at a workshop with the Senior Management Team on 3rd May.
- Work has now started on setting up the second wave of service design workstreams, including:
 - Information and technology services
 - Communication and marketing services
 - Library services
 - Planning, policy and MI services
 - Governance and legal services
 - Culture services
 - Alumni and development services
- We are currently agreeing the co-sponsors and scope for each of these workstreams. More information will be available on the website soon.
- The design phase will run until the end of June when we will present options for the future vision and design for professional services. This will include high level options for how the professional services operating model could work. We will also discuss which option is right for us and how this could be implemented.

We've heard some great stories of innovation and collaboration within UCL professional services and would love to hear more.

- One of the ambitions of TOPS is to recognise, celebrate and replicate where things are done really well.
- Since the last Leadership Briefing, we've heard about [InEDITA](#) – a fantastic training and development initiative for teaching administrators set up by three colleagues at UCL.
- The deadline for the [Finance – improving and simplifying](#) project survey has been extended until 5th May. Please let us know which Finance process is causing you the most problems, and you would like to see improved, by completing this short [survey](#).
- If you, or someone you know, is doing great things within professional services then we'd love to hear from you - tops@ucl.ac.uk.

Key messages

In previous editions of the Fortnightly Leadership Briefing we have outlined what TOPS *isn't about* in an attempt to help explain what TOPS *is about*. We are continuing to reinforce this message to help provide clarity on the aims of the TOPS programme.

What TOPS is about...	What TOPS isn't about...
Efficiency - improving our processes and systems so we can deliver our services in different, simpler and more efficient ways	Crude cost cutting
Being clear when and why things need to be done differently and consistently	Uniformity or one size fits all - everything being the same
Process simplification, improvement and clearer accountability	Centralising or decentralising everything
Greater collaboration across colleagues working in similar professional services areas	Encouraging duplication of effort
Recognising, celebrating and replicating where things are done really well	Stating that everything is broken and needs improving
Developing a vision and plan for the future, followed by a phased implementation of changes	Tipping everything upside down and changing everything at once

We are continuing our engagement with each of the staff unions. Going forward, we plan to meet monthly with each of the staff unions.

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Fortnightly progress

In the past fortnight we have...	In the next fortnight we plan to...
<p>Design phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the Easter break the number of design workshops held reduced slightly. In this period we held sessions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estates services (11/04) Teaching, student experience and education administration services (25/04) Research support services (26/04) People services (26/04, 27/04, 28/04) Innovation services (27/04) Held a number of meetings to discuss the emerging outputs from the design phase, including a meeting with the Vice Provosts and a workshop with the Professional Services Leadership Team and Faculty Managers. Held two successful workshops to explore career path planning for professional services staff involved in general academic support and general academic support management. Added a new page to our website explaining the programme stages and milestones. <p>Communities of practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the Student Recruitment community of practice, leaders have been appointed and the final planning workshop was held on 2nd May. The pilot steering group for the Digital Comms and Internal Comms communities have met and the boundaries for each community have been defined. 	<p>Design phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host a People services open drop-in session for academics, researchers and teaching fellows on the 8th May. You can drop in and provide your ideas and feedback any time from 9.00 – 12.00 (the team will be in G.12, 22 Gordon St). Hold further service design workshops for the first wave of services. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estates services (10/05). Since the appointment of a new Director of HR we have embarked on a range of People services workshops (02/05, 03/05, 04/05 and 05/05). Online surveys are available to submit your ideas for change. These surveys can be found on the relevant service workstream page under Vision & Design. Based on the content generated from the career path workshops, we plan to engage senior professional leaders to get their views on career paths for both generalist and specialist professional services staff. <p>Communities of practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the Student Recruitment community charter and announce the community launch. Commence the focus, vision and action workshops for the Internal Comms and the Digital Comms communities. Establish the Events Management community pilot steering group. Explore options for including other professional areas in the community of practice pilot.

Engagement

Recent engagement events

- We held the second TOPS [Engagement Group](#) on 27th April.
- Following feedback requesting that we run a [Lunch & Learn](#) session on the TOPS programme, we held our third Lunch & Learn with speakers from the TOPS programme team on 2nd May. For future Lunch & Learn sessions we have invited guest speakers from other institutions to share their experiences of transformation in professional services.
- In the past few weeks, we have attended; Faculty Managers monthly meeting (20/04), Engineering academics briefing session (20/04), Bartlett MAG (24/04), Institute of Ophthalmology professional services staff meeting (24/04), Vice Provost meeting (25/04), Professional Services Leadership Team and Faculty Managers meeting (25/04), Arts & Humanities Heads of Department meeting (26/04), Communications & Marketing all staff meeting (26/04), SLMS Research Coordination and Planning team meeting (27/04) and Electronic and Electrical Engineering professional services team meeting (27/04).

Upcoming engagement events

- In the next few weeks we are scheduled to attend: Extended Senior Management Team (03/05), Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy professional services all staff briefing (03/05), Mechanical Engineering academic research group (03/05), Medical Physics & Biomedical Engineering academic group (03/05), Biochemical Engineering professional services meeting (04/05), Political Science professional services meeting (05/05), SSEES management committee (09/05), HR Forum (09/05), Unite meeting (10/05), SSEES all staff meeting (10/05), Departmental teaching committee (11/05), Engineering Science faculty forum (12/05) and Institute of Child Health meeting (15/05).

If you would like us to come talk to you or your team about the TOPS programme please contact us at tops@ucl.ac.uk.