

STUDENT JOURNEY

EVENTS MANAGEMENT REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT ON FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduction

The Review of Events Management commenced on 13th January 2014 and closed on 13th February 2014. A range of discussion meetings were conducted throughout the Review with key stakeholders from within the University, and the recommendations are detailed below. These have been accepted by the Director of Marketing and Communication as the Service Owner for Events Management.

2. Background and Scope of the Review

The Student Journey Service Owner Consultation which took place in May/June 2013 confirmed the recommendation that the Director of Marketing and Communications should be the service owner of Events and Conferencing. It also confirmed that a review of Events Management should be carried out across the organisation to see where service improvements could be made.

There are a variety of different events that the University runs and also events that Schools and Professional Services want to deliver. All of these events require support from different areas of the University. The Events and Conferencing team is a key part of this, and support is also required from other areas. The Review therefore needed to consider not only the range of events that the University delivers but also how these events are supported. The scope of the review therefore included this, the support provided by the Events and Conferencing team and also other areas of support involved in preparing for and delivering the range of events undertaken.

The Review briefing document detailed a number of key questions that would be addressed through the Review, these being:

- Have all of the events that the University provides and supports been identified by the Student Journey?
- Does the current tier structure for internal BU events capture all the events and support needed across the University, is it clear to Schools and Professional Services how this meets their needs and what support is provided?
- Are there areas where the support provided by the Events and Conferencing team could be further improved?
- Are there ways in which Schools and Professional Services could work more effectively with the Events and Conferencing team?
- How can we ensure there is a single schedule of all the events being provided by Schools and Professional Services?
- What are the challenges involved in facilitating events and how could these be addressed?
- Do the University wide events such as graduation need additional staffing support from staff with appropriate training?

- The Review of Events Scheduling considered the need for a space prioritisation policy and procedures; what are the critical factors in relation to this with respect to University events?

In this report are details of the information gathered during the Review work with respect to these questions.

3. Overview of Review Process

A briefing document detailing the purpose of the Review and its objectives was circulated to the Events and Conferencing team on the 13th January 2014 accompanied by an email advising that the Review had commenced. The document was prepared by the Student Journey Organisational Change Lead in conjunction with the Director of Marketing and Communications as the Service Owner.

During the course of the review, the briefing document was also shared with a range of BU staff in Schools/Faculty and Professional Services who took part in the Review discussions. This included thirty School/Faculty based academic, professional and support staff involved in preparing for and delivering a range of events such as graduation and induction as well as knowledge transfer activities supporting research and enterprise. In addition there were a range of discussions with twenty staff based in the Professional Services including those who support graduation, enrolment, induction, careers fairs, student awards as well as internal and external events related to research, enterprise and community engagement, alumni and fundraising.

4. Recommendations

As a result of this Review a number of recommendations were made to the Director of Marketing and Communications as the Service Owner for Events and Conferencing.

4.1 The Review consistently evidenced that there are an increasing number and variety of activities that the University is undertaking which are seen by staff across the organisation as “events”. This impacts on the Events and Conferencing Team both in terms of the number of events it is being asked to support and also the level of support they can provide. As was also evident from the Student Journey Review of Events Scheduling there is a need to establish a consistent understanding of the different types of events the University provides and how these are then supported, whether by the Events and Conferencing Team or other parts of the organisation.

It is therefore recommended that the range of events the University provides are detailed and categorised along with clear guidance as to which of these are supported by the Events and Conferencing Team or other parts of the organisation. This work to be initiated by the Director of Marketing and Communications as Service Owner, and agreed with the University Leadership Team to ensure consistent understanding and application across the organisation. It is recommended that this work is completed before the commencement of the 2014/2015 academic year.

4.2 The Events and Conferencing Team have developed an internal tier structure to assist staff understanding of the different events that take place within the organisation and the support that the Team provides for these. This is complemented by a range of templates and guidance information all of which is available on the internal staff portal together with a BU Events Calendar. However it was very evident from the Review discussions that there is not

a widespread knowledge or understanding of this information within the organisation. It would be extremely beneficial therefore, having detailed and categorised events as detailed in recommendation 4.1, for the Events and Conferencing Team to work with staff across the organisation to build this knowledge and understanding. This will assist all staff in understanding what support is available, how they can plan for and deliver events and work with the Events and Conferencing Team.

It is therefore recommended that the Events and Conferencing Team build on their existing connections with staff in the Schools/Faculty and Professional Services to develop a communications plan in order to ensure a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities.

It is recommended that this is undertaken once the remit of the Team is confirmed in terms of the events it provides support for, but to begin no later than the start of the 2014/2015 academic year.

4.3 The findings of this Review with regards to the benefits that could be realised from improved forward planning of large events, support the findings noted in the Events Scheduling Review. The recommendation from that Review with regards to using the Delivery Planning process to capture these events is therefore also supported by the findings of this Review. It was evident from the Review discussions that the organisation needs to identify and plan for large events more effectively than at present in order to ensure that such events meet strategic priorities, can be accommodated and provided with the necessary resources to ensure their successful delivery.

It is therefore recommended that a formal process is established to identify School/Faculty and Professional Service events and that this is built into the annual Delivery Planning process. This recommendation complements that identified in the Events Scheduling outcome report, (recommendation 5.3) and should be taken forward by the Director of Marketing and Communications with the Director of Estates for implementation in the 2015 Delivery Planning process.

The Review also evidenced that it would be beneficial for the University to establish a consistent approach to engagement with external companies and organisations. The discussions with the Schools/Faculty and some Professional Services reported on many occasions that different staff within BU contact the same external organisations to explore opportunities for student placements, consultancy, knowledge transfer activities and similar. This approach doesn't present BU well to such organisations and misses the opportunity to build a more comprehensive relationship with them. It was evident that in some parts of BU attempts are being made to capture business engagement contacts, such as through Alumni Relations and Fundraising and the Centre for Entrepreneurship but this approach is not working across the whole of the University. It was reported that there is a need for one IT system to capture all business engagement, this could be extending use of Raisers Edge which is used by Alumni Relations and Fundraising or exploring the wider application of the CRM system which has been purchased from Tribal Education as part of the Student Journey Programme.

It is therefore recommended that consideration is given by UET/ULT to establishing a cross University approach to business engagement together with supporting technology. It is suggested that this recommendation is taken forward before the commencement of the 2014/2015 academic year.

4.4 In considering how the support specifically provided by the Events and Conferencing Team could be improved, the Review discussions identified a number of consistent themes. As already noted in earlier sections of this report, there is a need for the Team to increase the organisational understanding and knowledge of the support they can provide, and for which events. It was evident that extensive forward planning between all stakeholders does assist the successful delivery of the event and provide the opportunity for all those involved to be clear about their individual roles and responsibilities. It would therefore be beneficial to ensure this approach is in place for all events that the Team are involved in supporting.

It was also found from the Review discussions that while the Events and Conferencing Team are clearly keen to work collaboratively within the organisation, this was not always easy to achieve. It was evident that where events are perceived to have worked well, central to success has been effort made by all colleagues involved in the event, to work together to build positive relationships and developing an understanding of each other's needs and requirements.

The Review discussions also noted that the level of resource within the Events and Conferencing team often means the Team are not able to allocate the amount of time to an event that staff would like. As has already been noted, the increasing number of events demands on the Team impacts on the time they have available which is exacerbated when multiple events run simultaneously. The Review considered the possibility of using more BU students as a flexible resource to help as needed provided there were clear guidelines and expectations. There were mixed views with regards to this suggestion, but it would be something to consider alongside re-establishing the remit of the Events and Conferencing Team and the events that they support.

It is therefore recommended that the Events and Conferencing Team develop and implement a plan to improve the knowledge and understanding of their function across the organisation. It is recommended that this is taken forward and implemented once the remit of the Team is confirmed as noted in the complementary recommendation made in section 4.2.

It is also recommended that the Events and Conferencing Team, under the direction of the Director of Marketing and Communications (or agreed representative) develop a business partnering approach to working with the Schools/Faculty and Professional Services. It is recommended that this is taken forward as a matter of priority.

It is recommended that the Director of Marketing and Communications consider using BU students, including a placement student, as a possible resource to support more BU events.

In considering the ways in which the Schools/Faculty and Professional Services could work more effectively with the Events and Conferencing Team, a number of common issues were identified. It was evidenced that it would be beneficial for each School/Faculty to identify a member of the support staff who within their duties can provide support for small to medium size events the School/Faculty wants to run. It is envisaged these would be events of up to around sixty people. This would expand the provision of support for events which do not require specialist input from the Events and Conferencing Team, as well as providing consistent co-ordination of School/Faculty events.

It was also very apparent that where events involving the Events and Conferencing Team are most successful there has been extensive forward planning of the event involving all the key stakeholders. This was found to ensure that there are clear, agreed roles and responsibilities, effective and supportive communication between all those involved and assurance that all aspects of preparing for and delivering the event have been addressed.

It is recommended that School Directors of Operations consider providing administrative support in the Schools/Faculty where no such provision currently exists and do so in advance of the start of the 2014/2015 academic year. It is not envisaged that this support is in addition to the existing establishment, but would be incorporated into an existing role or roles depending on the level of events within the School/Faculty.

It is also recommended that the Events and Conferencing Team establish event planning processes to enable consistent and detailed forward planning of events which they work with the Schools/Faculty and Professional Services to deliver. This will support the recommendations detailed in sections 4.2 and 4.3 of this report with regards to the Team building their communications and business partnering relationships across the organisation.

4.5 The Review findings noted the value that is to be gained from having one schedule of University Events. It was evidenced that this will assist in planning for events, utilisation of space and management of associated resources such as car parking as well as ensuring that the events can be effectively supported by the Events and Conferencing Team and other Services within BU. The Events and Conferencing Team have already established the BU Events Calendar but it was evident from the Review discussions that knowledge and use of the calendar varies across the University.

These findings support those from the Student Journey Review of Events Scheduling and the recommendation made in that Review for BU to have one record of all events supported by improved forward planning. It was suggested that an enhanced use of Quemis might provide the IT capability to develop the single schedule of events.

It is recommended that the University has one system for recording all events taking place in each academic year and this is taken forward by the Events and Conferencing Team as an enhancement to the existing BU Events Calendar. This recommendation to be implemented in conjunction with the Events Scheduling recommendation 5.3 for an enhanced online IT system to provide one record of all requests for University space. It was recommended that this could be achieved from an extended use of Quemis and investigation into the system capability should be made during March/April 2014.

4.6 It was evident from the Review discussions that it would be beneficial to establish a BU wide space prioritisation policy and supporting procedures. A draft policy has previously been prepared by the Events and Conferencing and Space Planning Managers which could be reviewed and reconsidered. This also supported the findings from the Student Journey Review of Events Scheduling on the same issue. The growing number and type of event that BU is providing is generating increased demand on space and supporting resources and it was evidenced that this could be more effectively managed through a University policy on space prioritisation.

It is therefore recommended that the University establish and implement a space prioritisation policy and supporting procedures not only to support more effective use of

space but also to facilitate more effective planning for events and management of supporting resources. This supports recommendation 5.7 in the Events Scheduling Review which stated that the development of this policy and procedures should be taken forward by the Director of Estates as the Service Owner for Events Scheduling and then agreed by UET and ULT.

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