

STUDENT JOURNEY

EVENTS SCHEDULING REVIEW

REPORT ON FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduction

The Review of Events Scheduling commenced on 19th November 2013 and closed on 20th December 2013. A range of discussion meetings were conducted throughout the Review with key stakeholders from within the University, and the findings are detailed in this report together with recommendations on the future administrative support, for consideration by the Director of Estates as the Service Owner and the Head of Facilities 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 Estates should be the service owner for Events Scheduling. The rationale for this decision is the need to have one point of ownership within the University with responsibility and accountability for the management of the diverse range of demands that require use of University space. The service owner consultation also confirmed that a University space prioritisation policy and procedure should also be established. In addition to the Student Journey, an externally facilitated review of timetabling was undertaken during 2012. This had the objectives of improving student satisfaction, maximising the benefits of current processes and improving utilisation of teaching space. A number of the findings from that report are also considered as part of this Review of Events Scheduling. The majority of the recommendations set out in that specific report have not been taken forward to date due to the Student Journey review work needing to be undertaken.

The Review therefore needed to consider the support that is currently in place to schedule events into university space and the demands on space arising from different parts of the organisation. It also needed to consider the processes involved in scheduling the student timetable and how these could be improved, the optimum model for supporting this activity and the development of a BU space prioritisation policy and procedure. Finally, it took into account the recommendations made in the external timetable review.

The scope of the Review was therefore to consider the current provision of Events Scheduling support, future requirements and the optimum model for future delivery of the support. In addition the recommendations made in the external facilitated timetabling review.

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

- Does the definition of “Events” and range of support for Events scheduling identified by the Student Journey cover all of the services necessary for ensuring excellent support to students?
- Are there any additional areas of service improvement which can be identified in the School based timetabling and room booking support?
- Are there any additional areas of service improvement which can be identified in the support provided by the Estates Service Desk and Space Planning Functions?

- Are there any additional areas of service improvement which can be identified in the timetabling support provided by Additional Learning Support?
- What impact might the planned Unified Calendar have on current operational practice and processes?
- What needs to be considered in order to establish a BU Space Prioritisation policy and procedure? Do we assess the priority of different types of events effectively at present, and if not how could this process be improved?
- What constitutes an “excellent” student timetable, what are the common factors that contribute to this and how could they be measured?
- How can best practice be most effectively shared across the range of Events Scheduling support?
- The Target Operating Model Design Group recommended central management (as well as ownership) of Events Scheduling with local delivery where appropriate, e.g. school timetabling. Is this the optimum model?

This report details 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 staff providing Events Scheduling support, this included Estates Space Planning and Room bookings, School based timetabling and room booking staff and Additional Learning Support. This took place on 19th November 2013 and was accompanied by an email advising post-holders that the Review had commenced. The document was prepared by the Student Journey Organisational Change Lead in conjunction with the Head of Facilities Management on behalf of the Director of Estates as the Service Owner.

During the course of the review, the briefing document was also shared with the Events and Conferencing team, RKEO, Student Administration staff with responsibility for Exams and Admissions, a number of academic School Associate Deans, Heads of Department, Programme and Framework leaders, Directors of Operations and Academic Administration Managers, Additional Learning Support and the soft services Facilities Manager.

A range of meetings took place during the review. The Student Journey Organisational Change Lead and HR Manager or Business Analyst met with each School and their appropriate representatives, as well as staff from the Professional Services.

In addition to these meetings, separate discussion sessions were held with Space Planning and Room Bookings, School based timetable and room booking staff and Additional Learning Support.

All of this work took place during the Review period and was concluded by 20th December 2013. A subsequent meeting was held with Space Planning, Room bookings and the Events and Conferencing team in January 2014 to further consider a space prioritisation policy and procedure. It was not possible to convene this meeting before the 20th December 2013 due to staff availability.

4. Review Findings

In the details following under each area considered by the Review, the findings from the discussions with staff and students are provided.

4.1 Does the definition of “Events” and range of support for Events Scheduling identified by the Student Journey cover all of the services necessary for ensuring excellent support to students?

The Student Journey used the term “Event” to cover all of the activities that are scheduled into University space, whether this relates to timetabled student teaching, research seminars, conferences, careers fairs, exams, clearing and similar.

Throughout the Review discussions no additional type of activity was identified, but it was evident that the term “Event” is not used in the same way across the organisation and there is no common understanding of what activities it incorporates. This was reported in discussion with the Events and Conferencing team and the Estates room booking staff and space planning. In discussions with School based staff it was evident that people differed in their knowledge of the support available to them when they wish to book space and who to contact depending on the activity concerned. It was reported that it would be helpful to clarify what is meant by an “Event” and which part of the organisation should be contacted depending on the activity involved. It was evident that uncertainty arises for activities that involve more than booking a room for a meeting, and even internal activities can involve additional operational support if there is a need for caretaking, car parking or catering support.

In light of these issues it would therefore be beneficial to determine what an “Event” is, whether there are different categories of events, what these are and who in the organisation can be contacted to provide support for them. This will remove the uncertainty that currently exists and facilitate consistent expectations of what support is provided for the different types of events the organisation runs.

The Review work looked at the definition of events that was used in the 2011 proposal to establish a BU Events and Conferencing function. At that point an event was defined as “encompassing BU-hosted events and conferences, normally taking place (but not exclusively) within BU space and the hire of BU space and facilities by external organisations”. Since their establishment the Events and Conferencing team have provided guidance on the range of different activities they support and this is located on the staff intranet. However the Review found significant knowledge variation amongst staff about this intranet site, what support the Events and Conferencing team provide, and the extent to which staff should engage with them when considering an activity. It was evident that there is a tendency, particularly within the academic Schools, to contact locally based staff who deal with timetabling and room bookings.

It was apparent from the information gathered during the Review that many different parts of the University need to book space for activities that they are responsible for. There are teams within the Professional Services who need to book space for activities such as enrolment, induction, exams, clearing, research and enterprise. Similarly there are a range of activities taking place within Schools and an increasing demand for space to support conferences, research and enterprise engagement. The discussions with all of these different areas demonstrated that there are varying degrees of knowledge as to who in the organisation should be contacted when booking space. In all of the discussions with both

Schools and Professional Services, staff advised that they knew how to contact the central room booking service, although it was apparent that there is some uncertainty as to when to contact the Events and Conferencing team instead of room bookings.

From the discussion with the Schools it was evident that there is a clear understanding of the role of the School based administrative timetabler and the support the role provides for timetabling. There was uncertainty however, as to whether the School based timetabler and/or School based room booker should be contacted to find space for non-teaching activity. It was evidenced that School based staff can be asked to book space for research and enterprise related activities for example, this was advised to be because staff contact the person they know.

In summary, from all of the Review discussions it was evident that the areas providing support for the scheduling of events had been identified by the Student Journey. It was found that there is uncertainty as to what an “event” is classified as and greater clarity would be helpful and also clear guidance on what events are supported by the Events and Conferencing team. The Student Journey is undertaking a review of the management of events in January/February 2014 and this will be explored more fully as part of that review. It was also apparent that there is uncertainty in Schools and Professional Services with respect to which of the support services they should contact when they need space for non-teaching events.

The information gathered during the Review identifies the opportunity to improve the service support that is provided by clarifying what constitutes an “event”, as well as making clear the support provided by the different teams and the process by which events are scheduled. This will also link to the Events Management review, particularly with respect to defining the different types of event.

4.2 Are there any additional areas of service improvement which can be identified in the School based timetabling and room booking support?

The work undertaken by Student Journey during Phase 1 identified the opportunity to improve the student experience by providing an online calendar containing all student appointments; this is explored in more detail in 4.5 below, and this would be a service improvement that could be delivered. The Review also explored the current support provided in Schools for timetabling and room booking in order to establish if any other improvements could be identified.

Across the range of Review discussion meetings with School based staff which included timetablers, room bookers and academic staff, a number of areas were identified where improvements could be delivered. These related to IT system capability and the timetabling process itself and are reported in the following sections.

IT Systems

It was reported in the discussions with post-holders who have responsibility for timetabling and room bookings that at present Schools predominantly use excel spread sheets to record the education delivery aspect of academic staff workload. On the whole these sheets also record the information that is needed for Facility (the University timetabling system) and therefore serve two purposes. There is some variation to this approach, such as in the School of Health and Social Care for example, but the majority of Schools are capturing the data that is needed for both purposes in this way.

It was advised that the member of staff with responsibility for timetabling maintains this data, liaising with academic staff throughout the planning process and during the timetable scheduling work. It was evidenced that the spread sheets are large, do not link to Facility and significant time is involved in preparing and maintaining the information throughout the workload planning process. As the spread sheets are also used in preparing the timetable dataset the information they contain is broken down accordingly e.g. by units taught and the different weeks staff are delivering on units. In the majority of Schools there is one member of staff who has responsibility for undertaking this work, although some Schools also have other staff members who can access Facility to make changes or book rooms once the timetable is set.

In discussion with the staff who undertake timetabling the possibility of having an IT system which could hold all the education delivery information and link to Facility was explored. The purpose of this system would be to replace the current dependency on excel spread sheets and remove the need to enter the same information into a spread sheet and then also Facility. All of the timetabling staff with whom this was discussed saw considerable benefit from having an IT system that could support this. They advised it would remove the need to keep spread sheets, reduce the time involved in maintaining the information and if it could be part of the timetabling system would make the whole process more effective and efficient. It was advised that the current way of working also means that there can be differences between the data held in the spread sheets and Facility as the systems are not linked and can vary at times during the planning and timetabling process.

In the Review discussions with School academic staff, the same issue was discussed. In most Schools it was reported that significant benefit could be realised by having an enhanced IT system for planning education workload. The majority of those involved in the discussions advised that the current Excel spread sheets are not as helpful as they could be. In some discussions it was advised that they don't provide the information that Heads of Department and/or Framework or Programme Leaders need as the spread sheets have been primarily designed to gather the data needed for preparing the timetable. In one School this was not reported to be the case, however in that School additional work is undertaken to provide Heads of Department with information on all of the activities that academic staff are engaged with, not just education delivery.

It was noted by a number of academic staff with experience of working at other UK HEIs, that they have previously used a bespoke IT system which made the process much more efficient. In two Schools it was reported that they are considering alternative means of capturing the information, either through reports extracted from Facility or by developing a new IT system that would be more appropriate for both gathering the data and analysing academic workloads.

It was evident from the different discussions that the current means of gathering data to prepare the timetable and inform academic workloads could be significantly improved through enhanced IT capability. It was consistently reported that it would be more effective to have one IT system that is used across the organisation to hold information about education delivery which links directly to the timetable system. It was also evident from discussions with academic staff with responsibility for planning academic workloads, that at present there is no single system which captures all of the activities that academic staff are involved in. The spread sheets that are being used to record education delivery are distinct from information about research and enterprise bidding activity and research publications which is held in RED and BRIAN respectively. It was found that Schools are taking different approaches to gather all of this information and there could be considerable benefit from having one academic workload planning system that holds all of the relevant information.

All of the review discussions found therefore that the current system for capturing and planning education workload and then inputting the information into Facility is onerous, takes a significant amount of time and does not largely meet the different needs of those involved in the overall process. The current use of spread sheets is time consuming, does not provide easily accessible report information or the details needed by academic staff with responsibility for determining workloads. It was evident that there are two separate needs which the existing spread sheets are being used to meet but neither of those requirements are fully satisfied by the current process. Although the spread sheets provide the person with responsibility for timetabling with the data they need, the information cannot be directly uploaded into Facility and therefore has to be manually entered and verified. In addition, the spread sheets do not contain all of the information that an academic Head of group, department or programme leader needs in order to plan academic balanced workloads.

It was evident from the Review that the planning of education delivery information and preparation of the timetable dataset could be greatly improved by using one IT system that removes the need for excel (or similar) spread sheets. This would reduce duplication of work, double entry of data and should also provide consistent management information which will assist academic workload planning. It might also be possible for this IT system to record information about other workload activities, but if this is not achievable then it might be beneficial to consider a separate system which can capture all aspects of workload activity.

The question was asked during the Review whether the existing timetabling system, Facility, is capable of capturing education delivery information. At present this is not known and a meeting is scheduled to take place on 31st January 2014 to explore this with the system provider, Advanced Learning Systems. The Review was advised that the version of Facility the University is currently using is not up to date and there are a number of version updates which have not been implemented. It was also advised that other UK University's do use Facility with SITS, the Student Record System which BU has recently contracted for with Tribal Education. The possibility therefore of using Facility as the IT system to facilitate more efficient capture and recording of education delivery data needs to be explored. However, it was evident through all of the Review discussions that an IT system could deliver significant service improvements and more efficient ways of working.

Prior to the Student Journey Review, an externally facilitated review of BU timetabling was undertaken in 2012. The review stated that BU has a *"timetable operation which compares favourably to many others in the sector"*, but also identified a number of recommendations. One of these was to implement an *"online taught delivery submission system ... in order to enable the automated transfer of information directly into the timetable database"*. The benefits of doing this were listed as *"improved accuracy of information, a reduction in workload by eliminating a stage of input, a database that could be used to calculate planned contact for students to help plan resources"*. The findings of this independent review therefore reinforce what has been identified through the Student Journey Review and emphasises the opportunities for improvements which could be achieved through an online IT system.

Timetabling Process

It was also found from the review discussions that there is variation across the Schools in the way the process of timetabling is undertaken both in terms of what is expected from the post-holder preparing the timetable and how expectations of what can be delivered are managed.

The review discussions with School based timetabling staff found that all the post holders are responsible for ensuring that the data needed for the timetable is uploaded, checked and prepared for scheduling. They are then responsible for working through the scheduling of the timetable to prepare the student and staff timetables ready for the next academic year. The University schedule of dates for this process is provided by the Space Planning Manager.

Although this part of the timetabling role is common to all Schools, it was found that there is variation in terms of the supporting process to obtain the data, the decision making process for issues such as staff constraints, deciding whether requests for changes to the timetable can be made and the extent to which the timetabler is involved in planning academic workloads. This was reported in discussions with both the timetabling staff and School academic staff.

In discussions with academic staff one School reported that the School Executive is currently considering common principles for the workload planning process and has academic staff lead the process rather than support staff. In a couple of other Schools this is already happening, but it was not found to be the case in all Schools. It was also reported that there is variation across the Schools in the principles being worked to, for instance with respect to staff constraint requests for non-teaching days, and also who decides whether a timetabled session can be moved. It was advised that the lack of commonality results in different staff expectations across the Schools which can also be a problem when two Schools are involved in delivering the same unit. In some discussions it was noted that it would be beneficial to have agreed principles that are applied consistently in all Schools and the application of this to be supported by academic staff with responsibility for agreeing academic workloads.

From discussions with the post-holders who prepare the timetables these issues were also raised and particularly the need for support from academic managers throughout the planning and scheduling process. It was noted that at present there is variation across the administrative timetabler grades and also the scope of their roles which, for many of the post-holders, was seen to affect how they could do their job. However it was also noted by one of the post-holders on a higher grade that the key issue is having support from senior academic staff rather than the grade of the role. In this School the post-holder has the direct support of the DDE and other senior academic staff which was not advised to be the case in other Schools. The discussions also identified the variety that exists across the Schools with regards to staff constraints, what issues the timetable post-holder is expected to resolve, and the degree to which the School Executive leads in setting out the principles that are being worked to.

The external review of timetabling noted in the previous section, also recommended a review of the roles and grading of administrative timetablers. It was considered that this would be beneficial in order to provide comparability of roles across the Schools and the skills required, to support consistent levels of service across the organisation and to clarify who is responsible for the different aspects of timetable preparation, development and maintenance.

School Room Bookings

The review discussions also evidenced that in some Schools there are administrative staff whose roles include responsibility for room bookings. These posts are in addition to the administrative timetabler role and in most cases include other tasks as well as room bookings. It is understood that these posts exist as some Schools have dedicated space with specialist equipment which needs to be booked. The bookings are done by the School rather than central room bookings because of the detailed, programme specific knowledge that is needed.

In discussion with the School based timetable and room booking staff it was found that the support needed varies and depends on the amount and type of dedicated space the School has. In the Media School there are a significant number of dedicated rooms with specialist equipment, these can be booked by students as well as staff. The School has set up a separate database called SISO (stock in, stock out) in order to manage booking requests as Facility doesn't support this. It is not known whether this is due to the current version of Facility that the University is using or not. The post-holder who operates this system has to take the requests made and have them booked into Facility to ensure the room is confirmed. In the other Schools where dedicated rooms are booked the process is much simpler as they don't have such an extensive range of specialist equipment.

It is clear from the Review discussions and a demonstration of SISO that the SISO system involves a lot of work which could be done more efficiently if the timetabling system had the capability to manage the information that is being put into the SISO system. This is not known at present and needs to be explored. In the Media School the amount of dedicated space and operation of SISO requires a post-holder for whom this responsibility is the greater part of their post. In other Schools it was evident that this is not the case. It was not clearly established during the review discussions why in other Schools there is a need for another post-holder in addition to the administrative timetabler to have room booking responsibilities. It will be necessary therefore when considering the role of the administrative timetabler to consider this too.

4.3 Are there any additional areas of service improvement which can be identified in the support provided by Estates Service Desk and Space Planning functions? How can best practice be most effectively shared across the range of Events Scheduling support?

The support provided by Estates with respect to the scheduling of events is through the Space Planning and Room Booking functions. It was apparent from the review discussions that the majority of University staff engage with the room booking team, however there are a number of areas within the University which are involved in larger events and liaise with the space planning team. This is the case for example with respect to arrangements for clearing and confirmation and the exams process. The Review findings are therefore reported below under the respective support area.

Room Booking Support

It was very evident from all of the Review discussions that the existing room booking function provides highly effective support across the organisation and the team providing the service is considered to be very helpful. Its remit was reported to be well understood and staff within both Schools and Professional Services knew how to contact the service and had a clear understanding of what the function would provide.

The Review discussions clearly evidenced that School and Professional Service staff use the central room booking service to find rooms for a range of activities and find the online room booking function easy to access and helpful. The current system means that if anyone wants to book a room they can do so via an online room booking form accessible from the staff portal. It was reported from the discussions with School and Professional Service staff that they predominantly use this form to book one off space requirements for meetings, workshops, interviews and similar. In a few of the Review discussions with academic Schools it was found that staff did not know they could book a room online and instead asked the School based timetable or room booker. It was also noted, however, that School based staff often go directly to the admin support in the School even if they know about the online booking facility. This appears to be due to the fact that they know the person in the School.

The Review discussions with the central room booking and space planning teams reported that it would be helpful to have greater clarity on the distinction between what events are supported by Events and Conferencing and which are not. Similarly, where in a number of Schools there are post-holders with room booking responsibilities, the boundaries between the support they provide and that of the central room booking function can be unclear. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to establish clearer distinctions between the support that the different teams are providing and advising staff about this. See also related details in section 5.1 of this report.

In considering how the service could be improved the suggestion was made to have an enhanced online space request facility through which all requests for any space or activity needing space would be made. It is envisaged that this system would be similar to the existing online room booking facility but enhanced to record more details including the supporting resources needed for the request being made. This system would serve as a single source of all requests, would be accessible by Space Planning, Central Room Bookings and Events & Conferencing teams so that they can more effectively track and manage any space request and related resource requirements. It would provide one repository of all information relating to any request and enable all staff who might be involved in the activity to know what action has been taken, what operational resources are needed, who the key contacts are and who has lead responsibility.

This idea was explored through the review discussion meetings with the Events and Conferencing team, Schools and Professional Services as well as the Space Planning and Room Booking teams and soft service Facilities Manager. The feedback was predominantly supportive and the potential benefits were recognised particularly by those staff regularly holding activities in University space. It was advised that having a record of actions taken and confirmation of what arrangements had been made would be very helpful. In discussion with all of the different stakeholder groups, many examples were cited of occasions where either preparation for or the delivery of an activity had not gone as well as could be expected. It was noted that this causes significant frustrations both for the staff providing support and those whose activity it is. It was also reported that at present it can be difficult for both the Events and Conferencing team and Estates to sometimes know what arrangements the other has made, so having a single record accessible by both teams would be very advantageous. It was clear from the Review discussions that the teams endeavour to keep each other informed but inevitably issues arise.

It should be noted that in discussion with some of the academic Schools, whilst they could see the benefits of such a system, they are currently satisfied with being able to contact the School based timetable or room booker if they want to book space.

In the Review discussions with Space Planning and Central Room Bookings, it was advised that the existing Quemis system might have capability to provide an enhanced request system and this could be explored further.

The Review discussions also consistently evidenced the problems that can arise if the supporting teams are not contacted and also when requests for space are made very late. This creates difficulties not only in finding space, but also in providing appropriate resources such as car parking, allocating caretaker time, ensuring furniture and equipment are available and similar. It was clear from the discussions that better forward planning of space requests and identifying earlier any other resources needed would enable many frustrations and difficulties to be avoided.

It is evident therefore that the service provided by central room bookings is very effective, but could be enhanced further by establishing clearer boundaries between the support they

provide and that given by Events and Conferencing and the School based staff with responsibility for timetabling and room booking. In addition, an IT based system which could provide a single record of space requests and actions taken would also improve the service that is provided and should enable many of the existing frustrations raised by all staff to be addressed.

Space Planning Support

The Space Planning function leads the annual University timetabling process as well as planning for other regular events that the organisation needs to provide space for such as exams, clearing, confirmation, induction, open days and many more. The team also analyse future space needs and assess the impact of demands on the University's estate and how to accommodate the varying demands that arise.

In the Review discussion with the Space Planning and Room Booking teams many of the points detailed in the preceding section under "Room Booking support" were also noted. In addition to these however there were a number of particular issues, the most significant of these related to the forward planning of space requirements. The many and varied demands that the University has on its space and the difficulties in accommodating these was also evident from the process user groups in phase 1 of Student Journey. The University's space is limited and there are an ever growing number of requirements it needs to provide for.

From the Review discussions it was evident that the existing process for space planning involves different teams reviewing the known requirements in advance of the student timetable process and allocating space to accommodate agreed activities. The teams involved in this are Space Planning, Central Room Bookings, other Estates staff and the Events and Conferencing team. It was evident from the Review discussions that this collaborative approach works well and the teams involved have considerable experience in balancing the varied requirements. Across the academic year there are a number of regular known activities that need to be scheduled into University space and the staff who are responsible for these, also work closely with the Space Planning team to find accommodation to meet their needs. However, there is still a constant challenge to find suitable space and this is exacerbated by requests for space that fall outside the planning process and/or come after the student timetable has been set.

Another challenge that the Space Planning team faces is that it is not possible for them to confirm the same space is available every year for the same event. As the University alters its space in response to changing needs and different demands, it cannot ensure that the same space is available every year. This issue is widely understood by staff within the organisation but it was reported during the Review discussions that the uncertainty of what will be available year on year is not helpful. If the space allocated changes then it can, for example, impact on the arrangements that need to be made in order for the event to run which is not an efficient way of working. This issue was also noted in the Review meetings with other parts of the University, in particular the teams supporting Exams, Enrolment and Induction, Clearing and Confirmation.

Whilst regular activities that happen every year can be planned for in advance, it was evident from the Review meetings that there is a lack of forward planning for new activities that different parts of the University want to support. The academic Schools are increasingly keen to hold conferences and similar external engagement and research events, but the Review discussions found that many of these are not planned in advance and it can be very difficult to support them once the timetable has been set for the academic year. This affects not only whether there is space available but also on planning support resources such as caretaking and car parking. The Review had numerous examples reported of instances when student timetabled sessions have had to be taken out of space because it has been agreed

another activity needs the space. Similarly, the impact on caretaker time, catering support, car parking, furniture requests and related resources was also reported to be considerable.

In considering how best to address these issues, the Review explored with Schools and Professional Services whether it would be beneficial to establish a forward planning process for space requests. The purpose of this would be to capture all known activities requiring University space for the coming academic year thereby enabling a comprehensive assessment of what could be accommodated and identifying issues early so that priorities can be determined.

In the discussions with Professional Services it was unanimously agreed that this would provide the opportunity to improve the process of allocating space to meet needs. It was considered that the range of annual activities that many of the Professional Services need space for are already known and it would not be difficult to identify them. In addition the majority take place at the same time each year and the requirements of each event are usually the same. One of the current difficulties raised by the staff supporting exams, clearing and confirmation was that the space they are allocated can change each year even though the timing of the activity is usually the same. It was noted that earlier planning and knowing what space had been allocated would improve the existing process and remove the frustrations that arise when it is not known what space will be made available.

The Review meetings with Schools also evidenced that this would be beneficial, however there were concerns about how this might impact on additional events that arise during the year and whether it would mean that they couldn't be supported if space was allocated in this way. It was advised that there needs to be flexibility to accommodate ad hoc events that arise during the year and there might be a need to distinguish between the different sizes of events. It was recognised that large events are generally known about further in advance and could be more easily planned for than smaller events.

In discussions with a couple of the Schools it was suggested that the student timetable should be fixed for two years. This would be helpful to students as they would know their timetables and other space requirements could be accommodated around it.

At the end of the Review an additional meeting was held with Space Planning, Central Room Bookings and Events & Conferencing which explored the issue of forward planning and space prioritisation in more detail. This is detailed under section 4.6 below.

The Review found therefore that the current collaborative approach to Space Planning does work well and endeavours to plan for known activities each academic year as well as how to accommodate future changes to the Estate that arise from building developments and maintenance. However, there are on-going challenges that constrain how effective this process is and which present significant problems each year for Space Planning and also the Events and Conferencing team. It was found that the support provided could potentially be improved by better forward planning and earlier confirmation of the space available for regular, annual activities that take place in University space.

4.4 Are there any additional areas of service improvement which can be identified in the timetabling support provided by Additional Learning Support (ALS)?

The support provided to students by ALS includes individual note-taking assistance in timetabled teaching sessions and the use of technology and other resources which facilitate independent learning. The Review therefore considered how this currently works and whether the process could be improved.

From the Review discussions with ALS it was established that at present each student with additional learning support needs who has assistance in teaching sessions will have a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) allocated to them. Once the student timetable has been confirmed for the forthcoming academic year, the ALS technical co-ordinator allocates the LSA to the sessions where they are needed to take notes. It was advised that in the current academic year there are around sixty students who receive this type of support. The technical co-ordinator has to ensure, on a weekly basis, that any changes made to the timetables are reflected in the information that is given to students and the LSA. It was noted that at present the responsibility for checking any changes is with ALS and cascaded onto students, however, ALS noted their commitment to enabling independent student working and that it could be possible for the responsibility to be moved to students. In addition the degree to which students engage with their allocated LSA varies and ALS advised that they are aiming to change this which could be supported by requiring the student to take responsibility for checking any changes to their timetables and liaising directly with the LSA.

In addition to this aspect of timetable scheduling, ALS advised they have an appointment booking system for students who need to see an LSA which is separate to the timetabling system. There are around 1600 students who are supported by this. It operates through a separate database maintained by ALS and includes all the details of the LSAs. It was noted that ALS want to change this system and have one that links to the Student Record System rather than operating a different system.

The Review discussions with ALS also evidenced that the service wants to change the student focus from perceiving the ALS service as one that does things for them, to one which facilitates their independent learning. The focus of the technical co-ordinator role for example is increasingly to help students maximise the use of assistive technology made available to them from external funding resource. At present ALS advised that students are not making the most of what is available to them but this could be improved through training and LSA support.

It was evident from the Review discussions therefore that ALS are committed to providing a service that supports students to be independent learners. As part of this there is opportunity to improve the service by having an IT system containing LSA information that links directly to the student record system to support appointment booking and also the information that is needed to ensure note takers attend timetabled teaching. It was clear from the discussions that at present different systems are used which require additional processing and this could be addressed through better IT systems. It was not clear, other than because of historical ways of working, why the student does not advise their LSA of the timetabled teaching session they need note-taking support for. Indeed ALS thought the relationship between the student and their LSA could benefit by having more regular contact and one way of supporting this would be for the student to be responsible for checking changes to their timetable and liaising directly with the LSA.

4.5 What impact might the planned Unified Calendar have on current operational practice and processes?

The process user group analysis in the first phase of Student Journey identified that the student experience could be improved if all diary commitments were recorded on one, personalised, student calendar. It was envisaged that this would incorporate taught timetabled sessions as well as assignment deadlines, exam dates, booked appointments and similar booked activities.

Initial feasibility work has been undertaken by IT Services to see how this could be achieved and identified issues relating to the version of Facility that BU is currently using. It is not known at present that if BU was able to install a more up-to-date version of Facility, whether the system would have the functionality to provide a unified calendar. Further work needs to be undertaken to determine what can be provided through an updated Facility system and the SITS product. This is due to be explored with Advanced Learning Systems in a meeting at the end of January 2014.

In respect of this Review, therefore, it was not possible to determine what impact providing a unified calendar would have on existing operational practice and processes. This will need to be considered when the IT capability to provide a unified calendar is in place. More will be known about the feasibility of providing this after discussions with Advanced Learning Systems.

4.6 What needs to be considered in order to establish a BU Space Prioritisation policy and procedure? Do we assess the priority of different types of events effectively at present, and if not how could this process be improved?

It was evident from the work undertaken in Phase 1 of Student Journey that there are currently a range of different activities that have to be scheduled into University space and at times this presents a conflict of priorities. At present there is no policy which sets out how differing demands will be prioritised or who will make the decision. A draft space prioritisation paper has previously been prepared by Events and Conferencing and Space Planning but not taken forward to date as it had been pending discussion with the University Leadership Team.

The Review explored with all the stakeholder groups whether it would be beneficial for the University to establish a space prioritisation policy and accompanying procedures in order to support how different space demands are managed. It also sought clarification on how the different types of events the organisation provides are prioritised and if this could be improved.

It was evident from all the discussions with Schools and Professional Services that it would be beneficial to have an agreed space prioritisation policy for a number of reasons, but all linking back to the fact that the University has constrained space and a growing demand for its use.

In the discussions with Space Planning, Room Bookings and Events and Conferencing it was reported that a critical issue is being given enough advance notice of the request for space. At present the different teams collaborate and plan for the space needs of all known activities in addition to the timetabled teaching. However this doesn't currently capture every request and consequently any requests for a sizeable amount of space that comes after the timetable has been set for the year usually presents a problem. In such instances it is usually the case that timetabled teaching that has to be moved to accommodate the request, ordinarily this is done but at present there is no assessment of the impact this has on the student experience. It was reported that it would be better to try and capture all known or planned space requests earlier so that an assessment can be made of all the needs and decisions taken on what is a priority if this has to be agreed. It was considered that any space prioritisation policy and procedure would need to be adhered to across the organisation for it to be effective and should support the University in its strategic objectives.

It was also advised that another issue closely associated with being able to plan the use of space more effectively is identifying the need for additional support whether from Events and Conferencing, Estates, the caretaking staff and other resources such as car parking. The consequence of not planning far enough in advance is that last minute requests impact on the ability of all of these areas to effectively support the event taking place. The Review discussions evidenced many instances where this has happened and was reported to cause considerable frustration for all concerned. Although the issues are generally resolved, this is not done without difficulties which have a negative impact on the staff involved. It was reported that such instances should be unnecessary and be possible to avoid. (This is also noted under section 4.3).

In the Review discussions with Schools it was also advised that it would be beneficial to have a space prioritisation policy and procedure in place. The Schools also reported frustrations in finding space for events, particularly conferences, and knowing how their events are to be supported.

The suggestion was made in these discussions that, as part of the Delivery Planning process, Schools and Professional Services could be asked to identify any activities over the coming academic year that would need University space and how these requests support the School's strategic aims and objectives. It was noted in all the discussions that Schools thought this would be a good approach to adopt, however the point was made that not all events are known that far in advance and there is the need to have flexibility to respond to opportunities that arise. It was therefore suggested that it might be helpful to identify different types of events and space needs and decide which need to be included in Delivery Planning and which don't. It was suggested that there might not be a need to forward plan small events that only need a room and catering as opposed to larger events that require more support. All of the Schools also advised that in their view the top priority in any space prioritisation policy would be providing space to support education delivery as students are the main focus of the University.

In the discussions with Professional Services the suggestion that requests should be included in the Delivery Planning process was also supported, but as with academic Schools it was advised that there is the need to be able to respond flexibly to opportunities that arise.

The Review discussions evidenced therefore that it would be beneficial to have an agreed space prioritisation policy and procedure. This would support how space is managed and utilised across the organisation as part of meeting University wide objectives and those of the Schools and Professional Services. It was found that at present there are numerous demands which are increasing as academic staff want to provide more education and knowledge exchange engagement activities. This presents many different challenges to those who support the events both in respect of finding space and also providing the additional resources that are needed to make the event run effectively. It was evident that earlier planning would help manage this more efficiently and could be facilitated by building into the Delivery Planning process as part of identifying Estates (space) requirements. This information could be collated in order to enable earlier planning of space and associated resource requirements. It would also be possible to see how the university is using its space to meet strategic objectives and thereby provide a more cohesive approach to external engagement activities.

4.7 What constitutes an "excellent" student timetable, what are the common factors that contribute to this and how could they be measured?

The Review explored the question of what constitutes an excellent student timetable recognising that this is often an issue raised in student feedback and also the NSS results.

The objectives given to the externally facilitated review of timetabling in 2012 included considering how BU could improve student satisfaction with timetables and made a number of recommendations which are also included in this section.

In the review discussions with the School based timetable and room booking staff it was reported that the Schools work hard through the scheduling process to avoid issues which are known to produce dissatisfaction amongst students. The post-holders advised that it is evident from feedback that students do not like timetables which mean they have large gaps between their timetabled sessions, and there is also a need to balance the number of consecutive taught sessions on a given day. Another common complaint raised by students relates to early, i.e. 9am, teaching slots and also sessions later in the day. Those preparing the timetables therefore try to accommodate these factors, but inevitably there will be instances where taught sessions have to be scheduled in certain slots due to a variety of factors. These include constraints on what space is available for the session, particularly if a large lecture theatre is needed and the impact of other sessions on the overall timetable in instances where a unit is shared across a number of different programmes.

In addition it was also reported that students would like to receive their timetable for the year earlier than they currently do as this helps plan childcare cover as well as being able to arrange part time jobs. The other common issue noted by the post-holders is the request from students to view rooms online once the timetable is set so they can see if a room is free for them to use. It was suggested during the review discussion that it would be beneficial to manage student expectations as BUs space constraints mean it will be difficult to produce a timetable that satisfies all students.

A similar range of issues were reported in the discussions with academic staff in the Schools. It was noted that the main requirement when the timetable is being prepared is on meeting student expectations and providing a student friendly timetable rather than meeting staff requests, such as for free teaching days. It was consistently advised by all Schools that students perceive a good timetable is one which doesn't have any early teaching sessions, i.e. 9am and no late finishes and also has no more than 2-3 hours of consecutive taught sessions as the students find it hard to concentrate. In addition all of the discussions with the Schools noted that trying to identify other factors to determine a "good" timetable is difficult as student expectations vary from year to year.

In the discussions with academic staff the request was also made for students to be able to check room availability online. It was reported that students often want to use a teaching room for their own studies, especially if it has specialist software or equipment, but they don't know if it is available and this can be frustrating. It would improve the student experience if they could find out if the room is free and being able to do this online would be optimal. The review was advised that students have made this request through student forums, and iBU might be a channel through which the information could be provided.

In a couple of Schools it was suggested that the timetable could be set for two years with only seminar slots varying depending on the numbers of students. It was thought that this could be more efficient than changing the timetable year on year and would also enable students to plan other commitments more effectively, such as childcare and part time employment. It was also reported that the timetable is issued very late which doesn't help students, particularly those who aren't taking undergraduate programmes.

It was noted in discussions with academic staff in a couple of Schools that level H students are able to change their option choices after the first couple of weeks of term. It was advised that this is done because students want to see what is involved in the unit before they make their final choice. It was not apparent whether this approach is followed in all Schools,

however all students are required to select their option choices in the spring of the preceding academic year in order that resources and the timetable can be planned. Although allowing students to change their option choices after the start of the academic year was seen to be beneficial to them, it was also noted that this does mean the timetable can be changed after the start of term. This can impact not only those students who want to change options but the students already on the option. It was therefore also reported that the benefits of allowing students to change their options needs to be considered alongside the impact of making the change.

In the review discussions with academic staff it was reported in one School that none of BU's lecture theatres are equipped for teaching science subjects and therefore it is not possible to provide scientific demonstrations which is not beneficial to the students. In a couple of Schools academic staff asked to have access to the whole timetable so they can assess what impact any changes to timetabled sessions would have across the students affected.

In discussions with Space Planning the process and timescales for preparing the timetable were considered. It was evidenced that work on the timetable can only begin when the curriculum is rolled over into the new academic year, this is done by Student Administration. The timetabling process can be complicated if there are changes to the curriculum once the rollover has taken place, this happens if Schools decide to make changes to their programmes later in the academic year. It was also noted that the scheduling process is impacted when the staffing resource is not known at the time the timetable dataset is being prepared. This links in part to the business planning and budget approval process; if Schools are unable to recruit to academic posts until the budget has been agreed, the dataset has to be prepared with unstaffed units. Consequently late changes to the timetable may then be necessary when the staffing is finally confirmed, and this was a point noted in discussion with some of the academic Schools as well. It was also noted that other changes, such as the move to a common academic structure, bring additional challenges to the timetabling process.

In order to assist with these issues it was suggested that those preparing the timetables need to be effectively supported through establishing clear timetabling procedures that all Schools would be required to follow. It was noted that in one School, adopting a standard delivery pattern across all programmes has significantly improved the student timetable in the current academic year, something also noted in the review discussion with the School concerned. It was also advised that until the common academic structure is in place across all programmes in all Schools there will be a variation in programme delivery which will impact on how effectively timetabling can be done.

The suggestion of setting the timetable for a couple of years was also discussed with the Space Planning team. It was noted that this could be advantageous and if possible would give students, and staff, a confirmed timetable earlier which could be beneficial. However it was also advised that the current demand and constraints on BU space would impact on how feasible it would be to achieve this. In addition, due to the space that is available some students will be scheduled into late teaching slots. At present their experience of this can be balanced by changing the timetable the next academic year, however if the timetable was set for a couple of years the students would have the same late slots for both years which could impact on student satisfaction.

The externally facilitated review of timetabling in 2012 also considered the issue of how BU could improve student satisfaction with timetables. The recommendations from that reported noted that:

“It can be problematic to have clarity on exactly what students want from their timetable, and even if that clarity exists, it is rarely the case that the student body speaks with one

voice. Practical issues can also prevent the University from delivering exactly what students want”.

The report recommended BU identify the factors that are important to the majority of students and focus on meeting these, ideally these priorities should be ones that are measurable in order to assess impact. A number of suggestions were made such as having one or two days free of teaching, the maximum number of consecutive hours of teaching and the maximum and minimum time gaps between teaching sessions in one day. It was advised that establishing such priorities and measuring against them would be beneficial not only in preparing the timetables but also managing student expectations.

From all of the review discussions therefore it was evident that determining an excellent student timetable is difficult, but that there are a number of common issues which are known to impact on student satisfaction which if addressed could improve the timetabling process and student satisfaction.

With respect to student satisfaction it would be helpful to determine, in conjunction with students, an agreed set of priorities that will be worked to and measured. It is suggested these relate directly to the most common issues already raised, therefore the timing of taught sessions, hour gaps between teaching sessions and the number of consecutive hours of teaching. In addition it would be beneficial to students to provide them with the ability to check room availability, ideally online, so they can plan their time and use of BU facilities.

In addition the review findings reflect that there is a need to establish common processes and procedures for timetabling that are consistently applied across all Schools. The University, for example, has been committed to not changing the student timetable after the start of term in order to reduce student dissatisfaction. The Review however found that this is taking place in some areas, similarly the different constraints operated in Schools leads to different staff and student expectations. It was noted that these issues, and others as detailed in section 4.2 of this report, could be helped by common timetabling processes that all Schools follow.

4.8 The Target Operating Model Design Group recommended central management (as well as ownership) of Events Scheduling with local delivery where appropriate, e.g. school timetabling. Is this the optimum model?

The Service Owner consultation in May/June 2013 confirmed the Director of Estates as the Service Owner for the scheduling of events. During the first phase of Student Journey the Target Operating Model Design Group recommended that in addition to central ownership, the delivery of Events Scheduling could be improved by having central management as well, particularly with respect to those responsible for timetabling. The rationale for this being that it would support better space prioritisation and utilisation as well as a more streamlined service providing flexible support of shared expertise.

This review therefore explored the proposal that School based timetabling posts be centrally managed but with post-holders located in the Schools given the knowledge that is needed of School specific programmes and academic staff. The benefits of this proposed model being to provide cover for timetabling as the majority, but not all, Schools rely on one post-holder to plan, schedule and maintain timetables. In addition it was suggested that this model would facilitate more effective sharing of knowledge, development of best practice and common timetabling processes and principles across the organisation.

In discussing this model with the School based timetable and room booking staff it was noted that the timetablers meet regularly with Space Planning to share knowledge and best practice. It was reported that in some Schools using more than one person to prepare the timetable has been tried, but was found to not work effectively. It was advised that the nature of the work and the knowledge of School programmes required to produce the timetable, requires one person to have oversight of the whole process within the School. It was also reported that each School works in a different way and it would be difficult for the timetabler in one School to cover in another due to the variation in delivery, programmes offered and how the curriculum is constructed.

The review discussions with all School academic staff reported similar issues and concerns with moving to central line management, even with the timetabler being located in the School. In all the Schools, examples were cited of previous changes which have meant school based staff have been moved centrally and the negative impact the Schools perceive this has had on the support they then receive. It was reported that when staff are moved away from the School they are supporting, there is a risk to the service provided even if they are still locally based. It was advised that if the support is provided within the School the post-holders understand what is important from the School's perspective, they have a detailed knowledge of the programmes the School offers and the staff that teach on them. They are able to build relationships with staff in the School and in most instances the timetabler role involves more than just delivering the timetable, there are other duties incorporated into their roles. It was noted in discussions with the Schools that there is a risk to business with only one person doing the timetable and if they are absent for any time then who will pick it up. However it was advised that it would be better to have another person in the school who could help out rather than move to central management.

The model was also discussed with the Space Planning and Room Booking teams who advised they already work closely with the School based timetabling staff. It was reported that at present, due to devolved line management, it is very difficult to establish a consistent approach to timetabling and also the processes and procedures that support the timetabling process. It was noted that the timetabling roles across the Schools incorporate different tasks and responsibilities in addition to timetabling and it seems that this then results in staff having different priorities. It was reported that if the roles were centrally managed it would be possible to achieve not only a more consistent approach to the tasks involved but also to develop cover, the ability to undertake more space analysis and impact assessment of changes made.

The external review of timetabling in 2012 considered the roles and grades of administrative timetablers and this is also referred to in section 4.2 of this report but is of relevance with respect to a model of central line management too. The recommendations from that Review included standardising administrative timetabler roles as it was considered that this would ensure comparability of roles across the organisation, support institutional levels of service and promote a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.

The Student Journey review clearly evidenced the concern of academic Schools in moving to a model of central management of timetabling, but with locally based delivery. The reason for this being the need for the timetabler to have detailed knowledge of the Schools programmes, delivery and academic staff. In addition it was extremely evident that Schools believe previous moves to centralised management of support staff has negatively impacted on the support the School then receives. There was also scepticism that the Schools would benefit from central management in terms of managing business risk by providing scope for cover if the timetabling post-holder is absent. It was advised that the knowledge needed in the different Schools means this would be very hard to achieve by having another person being asked to provide cover as and when needs arise.

The recommendations from the external review of timetabling noted that *“the existing model of School-based timetable design, with central co-ordination, scheduling and space allocation process currently works effectively and appears to be a good fit with the institutional culture and location of key decision-making. However, the fact that between Schools (and even within them) the grade and scope of timetable-related administrative roles may differ does present risks for continuity of service”* The recommendation that followed from this was that the administrative roles supporting timetabling should be standardised.

5. Recommendations

As a result of this Review and the findings presented in this document a number of recommendations are brought forward for consideration by the Director of Estates as the Service Owners for Events Scheduling.

5.1 It was consistently found during the Review that there are different understandings within the University as to what constitutes an “event” and which teams provide support for these. There is clearly a need to establish a consistent understanding of the different types of activity that the University undertakes so this is clear across the organisation as well as knowledge of the support teams that are available to assist with them. This can be assisted further by ensuring that the remits of the different support teams are clear. It is also evident that there is a need to work with University staff to develop their understanding of the support available in order to ensure that requests for support are directed to the most appropriate area.

It is therefore recommended that as part of the Events Management Review being undertaken by the Student Journey in early 2014, what constitutes an “event” is reviewed in order to establish a consistent approach across the University.

It is also recommended that clear distinctions are established and communicated between the support provided by central room bookings, school based timetabling and room bookings, events and conferencing and space planning so that University staff know who to contact. This work to be facilitated by the Student Journey Organisational Change Lead in conjunction with the recommendations detailed in section 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.3 below, to be completed by the start of the 2014/2015 academic year.

5.2.1 The Review evidenced that the current use of spread sheets to capture education delivery information to support both academic workload planning and the preparation of the student timetable is not efficient. The reasons for this relate to the time involved in gathering and maintaining the information, separately inputting this data into Facility which means two separate systems need to be followed to produce the timetable. The timetabling process could be significantly improved if the University had an IT system which could be used to prepare the information needed for the timetable and upload it directly into Facility. This issue was also identified in the externally facilitated review of BU timetabling undertaken during 2012.

In addition the Review found that the information currently gathered does not incorporate all of the workload that an academic member of staff is engaged in. Any information for example relating to research, enterprise or programme management responsibilities is not incorporated and is recorded in separate IT systems, notably RED and BRIAN as well as other internal School records. In the majority of Schools, staff with responsibility for managing academic staff workloads reported that the process could be improved by having a system

that contained all of the information about academic staff activity. This would provide one record of all academic staff activities which would support balanced workload discussions with academic staff, improve transparency of academic activity and assist line managers in the annual appraisal process. It is noted that this issue is outside of the Student Journey project, but it is noted as an issue that was identified as a result of the Review discussions.

It is therefore recommended that the University sources and implements an IT system which can capture education delivery information needed for the preparation of the annual timetable. The current processes involved in preparing the information for Facility are extremely time-consuming, require double entry of data and two separate sets of information to be simultaneously maintained none of which is an efficient method of working. This system also needs to link directly to Facility (the University timetable system).

It is recommended in the first instance that the system capability of Facility is explored to determine if an updated version of the software can support this. This assessment to be led by the Student Journey programme team in conjunction with IT Services and Space Planning and completed by the start of the 2014/2015 academic year. It should be noted that a business case might need to be made depending on feasibility and costs.

If it is not possible for Facility to be used to capture education delivery information, then it is recommended that a project proposal for a new IT system is submitted to PMB for consideration no later than August 2014.

It is also recommended that the University consider the possibility of implementing an IT system to facilitate all academic workload planning. It is noted that this is outside the scope of the Student Journey but was a significant issue identified during the Review discussions and is therefore recommended to UET for consideration.

5.2.2 The Review findings clearly demonstrated the variation that exists across the Schools with respect to the process of populating the timetabling. This relates to matters such as operational principles, academic leadership and decision making and the role and scope of the administrative timetabler. As a result of this there are different staff expectations relating to timetables, varied approaches in dealing with staff constraint requests and different demands on the administrative timetable role. All of these issues were evidenced to impact on the timetabling process itself as well as staff expectations.

It was also evident from the Review, as well as the external review of timetabling, that the administrative timetabler role operates differently in the Schools and there are a range of different responsibilities involved as well as a range of different grades. The varied expectations of the role was also found to impact on the process of timetabling. It would therefore be beneficial to have a consistent role that is supported by academic leadership and consistent processes which are implemented by all the academic Schools.

As part of the Review it was proposed that School based administrative timetablers are line managed centrally although still located within the respective School. The reasons for this being to establish consistent timetabling processes and timetabling roles, the ability to provide cover for timetabling support and an enhanced service across the organisation. This model was discussed with the various stakeholder groups during the Review discussions.

It was very evident in the feedback from academic staff in the Schools that there is widespread concern over adopting this model. This concern is with respect to the need for timetablers to be based in Schools as the role needs detailed knowledge of academic programmes and the staff delivering them and also equally the concern that previous moves to central management of support staff has negatively impacted on the service the School receives. It was also apparent in discussions with the timetabling post holders that they also believe their roles require them to be based in the School.

The Review also found, from discussions with Space Planning and the recommendations from the external review of timetabling in 2012, that the current devolved management model, variation in administrative timetabling roles and responsibilities does impact on establishing consistent processes and procedures for timetabling within the organisation as a whole. It was recognised that administrative timetablers need to be located with the School they support, however there is a need for a more standardised approach to timetabling and the roles that support it.

It is recommended that a review of the administrative timetabler function including duties, skills and scope of the function is undertaken by the Student Journey Organisational Change Lead in conjunction with the Head of Facilities Management in order to establish a consistent role across the organisation. This review should be undertaken during March/April 2014.

It is also recommended that University timetabling principles and procedures are established which are then administered by all Schools. The work to be led by the Student Journey Organisational Change Lead, to be completed by early 2014/2015 academic year and implemented for the 2015/2016 timetabling cycle.

It is not recommended at the current time that line management of the School based administrative timetable role becomes centralised. It is evident that the roles need to be located in Schools due to the detailed programme and staff knowledge that is required. In establishing a common administrative timetable role together with standard processes and procedures, a consistent approach to timetabling can be achieved.

5.2.3 It was evident from the Review that in some Schools, due to the amount of dedicated space and specialist equipment they have, additional support is needed to facilitate booking of these resources. At present one School is using a separate database system to administer this work. It is not known whether Facility could support this requirement and this needs to be explored. It would be more efficient to use one system to book rooms and manage the resources held in those rooms rather than using separate systems.

In addition the Review evidenced that there are School based roles, in addition to the timetabling role, which book dedicated space and operate separately to the central room booking service. In order to ensure the most consistent support across the organisation it is necessary for these posts to be included in the review of administrative timetabling. This also links to the recommendation detailed in section 5.1 which identifies the need to establish clear boundaries between the different parts of the University involved in allocating space.

It is therefore recommended that the Facility system functionality be explored further to see if it could be used to enable management of room based resources to meet all school timetabling and room booking requirements. This assessment to be led by the Student Journey programme team in conjunction with IT Services and completed by the start of

the 2014/2015 academic year. If this is possible then it is recommended that the change is made during 2014/2015 in order to support the 2015/2016 timetable.

It is also recommended that the review of administrative timetable function proposed to be undertaken by the Student Journey Organisational Change Lead, as detailed in the recommendation in 5.2.2, includes an assessment of each School's room booking requirements for dedicated space.

5.3 In considering the support that is provided by the Space Planning and Room Booking functions the Review found that the current service is seen as very good and effective by staff based within Schools and Professional Services. In respect of Room Bookings there is a clear understanding within the University regarding how to access the support provided and the service is viewed as very responsive and helpful. In some of the Schools it was noted that academic staff often contact the School timetable or room booker if they want to book space. It was evident that the service could be improved by having greater clarity on the different support that is provided by Central Room Bookings, Events & Conferencing and School based timetabling and room booking.

The Review found, as the Student Journey phase 1 process user groups also evidenced, many examples cited of activities where arrangements didn't go as smoothly as might be expected. It is also evident that the service provided by Central Room Bookings, Space Planning and Events & Conferencing would be enhanced by having one online IT system that they could all access and which captured all the different information they need. It will be important to ensure if the system can be implemented, that all University staff understand and use the processes involved so that the benefits are realised.

It was also evident that there are persistent difficulties in being able to allocate space for regular known activities and those that arise during the academic year. The Review found that the Space Planning function works collaboratively with other parts of the University to ensure that space needs are planned for and this is effective. However, the planning is impacted by having to accommodate activities that arise very late, have not been planned in advance and changes the University needs to make each year to the estate. The Review evidenced the opportunity to improve annual space planning by establishing a formal process through which requests for certain types of space would be made across the whole University and that this could form part of the annual Delivery Planning process. This also relates to section 5.7 below and the recommendations for a Space Prioritisation Policy and Procedure.

It is therefore recommended that the boundaries between central room bookings, the Events & Conferencing team and School based staff with responsibility for room bookings are clarified. This work to be led by the Student Journey Organisational Change Lead in conjunction with the recommendations detailed in sections 5.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3.

It is also recommended that an enhanced online IT system is established to provide one record of all requests for University space, this system to be jointly accessible by Space Planning, Central Room Bookings and the Events & Conferencing teams. It is recommended that the wider capability of Quemis is explored to establish if that system can meet the requirements and for this work to be undertaken by the Space Planning and Central Room Bookings during March/April 2014.

To enhance the University's space utilisation and planning capability it is recommended that a formal process is established which will identify School and Professional Service

space requests. It is recommended that this forms part of the annual Delivery Planning process and is included in the Space Prioritisation policy and procedure, the recommendations for which are detailed in section 5.7 below. It is recommended that this is taken forward by the Director of Estates as the Service Owner of Events Scheduling to be implemented in the 2015 Delivery Plan process.

5.4 The Review discussions with Additional Learning Support found that the service is keen to change the way students perceive the support they receive. It was noted that ALS are committed to facilitating students to be independent learners who proactively engage with the Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and maximise the assistive technology available to them. This could be supported by students being responsible for finding out about changes to their timetables and liaising directly with their LSA, therefore removing the need for ALS to do this work.

It was also evident that ALS have a number of IT systems that support their work and these do not currently link to the student record system, Facility or other University systems such as Finance. This does not support the optimum way of working and it was apparent that there are a number of different processes involved in advising students of changes to their timetables, booking appointments with their LSA as well as supporting the LSAs in their work and processing LSA pay claims. It should be possible to simplify these by using different technology enabling a more effective way of supporting students in their learning.

It is therefore recommended that ALS consider a change to their existing processes and the student becomes responsible for identifying any changes to their timetables which they communicate directly to their LSA.

It is also recommended that ALS investigate what IT systems would enable more effective management of student and LSA information and whether this capability resides within the SITS product or not.

5.5. The Review noted that the aim of providing students with a unified calendar needs to be explored in more detail, initial feasibility investigations have raised issues with the current version of Facility that the University is using. At the time of writing this report a meeting is pending with Advanced Learning Systems who supply the software to explore the capabilities of newer versions. It is expected that a more up to date version will offer enhanced capability which will also link with the SITS product.

It is therefore recommended that the feasibility of updating Facility is explored in order to ascertain whether a unified calendar could be provided. This work to be undertaken by the Student Journey programme team in conjunction with Space Planning and an outcome determined so that any changes can be implemented for the 2015/2016 timetabling cycle.

5.6. The Review considered what constitutes an excellent student timetable and identified a number of factors in relation to this. It was very apparent that defining what is an excellent timetable is difficult as all students will have different expectations. However it was clear from the Review discussions that there are a number of common priorities that students identify as areas of dissatisfaction. These being large gaps between taught sessions, the number of consecutive hours of teaching and also the start and end times of timetabled slots. These issues were also identified in the externally facilitated review of timetabling.

The Review also evidenced that it would be beneficial for students to be able to check room availability and ideally this should be through an online system, whether iBU or a similar facility.

It is therefore recommended that the University identifies a number of measurable priorities in order to support the enhancement of student satisfaction. Taking into account the findings of this Review and those of the external review of timetabling it is recommended that these include gaps between teaching sessions, number of consecutive hours of timetabled teaching and the start and end times of timetabled sessions. It is recommended that this work is taken forward by the Space Planning Manager on behalf of the Director of Estates and implemented to support the 2015/2016 timetabling cycle.

It is also recommended that consideration is given to providing students with the facility to check room availability online. It is recommended that this work is taken forward by the Space Planning Manager on behalf of the Director of Estates and if possible is implemented to support the 2015/2016 timetabling cycle.

5.7. The need for a space prioritisation policy and associated procedures was identified in the service owner consultation in May/June 2013 as a way of supporting decision making when there are conflicting demands for University space. The Review evidenced support across the Schools and Professional Services for establishing a policy and procedure. The reasons cited for this included balancing the increasing demands for space which is already constrained, the need to clarify what events the University sees as taking precedence and linking the allocation of space to the organisation's strategic priorities. In addition it was very evident that space planning could be enhanced by earlier notification of any requests for space in addition to the regular known activities and timetabled teaching that take place each year. There was consistent feedback that it would be beneficial to build requests for space to support certain types of events into the annual Delivery Planning process.

It was advised that any policy and procedures need to be owned across the organisation, and therefore by UET and ULT, in order for them to work effectively and improve the service that is provided.

It is therefore recommended that the University establish and implement a space prioritisation policy and procedure which is adhered to by all staff in order to support more effective utilisation of space. It is recommended that this is taken forward by the Director of Estates as Service Owner of Events Scheduling and agreed by UET and ULT.

The recommendation detailed in section 5.3 regarding requests for University space to be built into the annual Delivery Planning process is also of direct relevance to the space prioritisation policy and procedures.

6 Concluding Comments

This report and recommendations are presented to the Director of Estates for consideration and decision as the Service Owner of Events Scheduling.

Jackie Molnar
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