



FAQs

Why move to schools?

Faculties are large internal structures focused on management and process. Moving forward we will need more agile structures that are able to engage more rapidly and meaningfully with key stakeholders. These structures have to be more student centered, providing a focus for student engagement and support, whilst also acting as the catalysts for development of the academic environment.

By creating schools in this way, and devolving responsibility down to the lowest practical level, we create a more flexible and dynamic environment that is better equipped to deal with the new, more volatile and competitive environment we find ourselves in.

What about the Faculty of Health & Social Care?

During this change process the university needs to maintain our excellent relationship with the NHS and related key stakeholders. The current faculty is very well aligned with this sector and proposals therefore suggest maintaining the current grouping to maintain this consistency of approach in what we know will be a volatile time for commissioning. We do need to work with staff in Health and Social Care to ensure that the framework we develop as a university also applies, where appropriate to this area of work. The Executive will therefore work with staff as part of this consultation, and during the implementation phase, to identify how best to continue the current level of support given to the coverage of NHS based activity, whilst ensuring a pan university consistent structure.

Why consult now?

The University has recently agreed an exciting £15M program of investment over 5 years with IBM. This includes support for a new range of packages focused on student engagement and analytics. The program moves forward in January and if it is not to be delayed or incur additional costs we need to be clear on our infrastructure.

There are also currently a number of key job adverts on hold, including the Dean of Business, and we need to progress these in the new year if we are to have them filled by the summer. In addition it is important that during this consultation the current VC is able to advise on how this thinking fits with the work undertaken to date on the development of schools. If the VC designate is to be able to generate a road map for discussion in January he felt he needed to seek staff views on key points around the overarching structure and its implementation now.

What is being consulted on?

The VC designate felt it was important before he drafted a more detailed document in January, that all staff had the opportunity to feed in views on the future shape of the university. For example, how many schools, in what areas? As part of this exercise he also wished staff to have the opportunity to raise points about how such schools should interact with services, and potential implications for service structures. These responses will help shape the proposals in January.

What will happen to faculty offices?

We need to first identify what the overarching school and service structure will be. We can then work with support staff, academic staff and students to identify where best the support activity fits. This process will take some time and is likely to continue into the 2014/15 academic year. Until we are clear on future changes, it will be business as usual.

Will staff be at risk?

By definition, moving from faculties to schools impacts on some pro Dean and executive Dean roles. Exactly what that impact is will become clearer as we firm up on LSBU's requirements moving forward. The proposals regarding other areas, including faculty offices for example, are about the distribution of work between schools and the center. Until we are clear on future changes it will be business as usual.

Do all schools have to be the same size?

No they do not. They need to be big enough to deal with fluctuations in demand but the most important criteria is that they provide a meaningful grouping of subjects and as such are able to interact with students and external stakeholders to create a dynamic academic environment built around research, enterprise and teaching. Indeed the relative sizes are expected to vary from the current position as the proposals are based on what is felt to be needed for the future not just the present. Areas such as Creative Industries, Applied Science, Architecture and the Built Environment, for example, all currently have scope for growth.

How can we do this for the next academic year?

At this stage all that is being said is that we will have schools in place for next academic year (i.e. an academic infrastructure). Work about integrating these within an appropriate service structure and the review of processes etc will take longer. The details can only be worked out once we have determined the big picture and the implementation plan will require input from a wide range of staff and students.

What about student views?

The Students' Union has been engaged and is seeking to work with students to get their thoughts. It is important we involve students throughout this process and that we maintain the work to date aimed at improvements in student satisfaction.

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