Overview of the department
Welcome to the Information Services Review for 2014/15

The last year of organisational calm has given us the space to consolidate and improve our performance across the Directorate. The numbers cannot lie. Increasing our NSS scores to 90% for IT and 89% for Library from what were already high benchmarks in the services was extremely satisfying and hugely impressive given the turmoil of the previous year. Our call abandonment levels at the Service Desk have plummeted to an all-time low, the reliability of our services have reached an all-time high and our Library opening hours have been extended to ensure seven day per week opening during term time. These things do not happen by accident and more particularly, they do not happen just because senior management said ‘let it be so’. They happen because an extraordinarily dedicated team of IT and Library professionals commit themselves to ensuring the parts of the service for which they are responsible are passionately cared for.

Earlier this year, the senior team and I reviewed both the Library and IT strategies to ensure they remained fit for purpose and have concluded they do continue to be an effective lodestone with which to navigate our future direction. Of course, should circumstances change we will always be prepared to re-evaluate and if necessary re-design our strategies accordingly. We are sensitive to the fact that the University’s own strategy is in gestation and the result may well require us to re-think our approach. I believe that our services are in the best position they have ever been to flex and adjust to changing demands should it be necessary to do so.

In many ways, this has been our most successful year to date and I would not want to miss this opportunity to thank all my staff throughout Information Services for an outstanding year’s work.

Building on our success
IT Business Management

Claire Priestley
Director of Business Management

IT Business Management provides the capability to build partnerships with Schools and Professional Services, ensuring we continually align our services with business requirements.

In its second year, the Business Management function continued the success started in the previous cycle; building partnerships, developing capabilities and delivering improvements in our IT services across the University. This year saw the embedding of new teams, the continued development and improvement of new internal processes and an array of notable achievements which had a positive impact across the University including the first ever publication of an IT wide Operational Plan to all stakeholders.

Highlights of the year

- The Supplier Relationship Management team manage all hardware and software purchasing for the University and ensure full licensing compliance across large enterprise applications such as SITS and SAP through to niche educational applications such as Matlab and SPSS. The team processed over 10,000 SAP orders managing a £7M budget to within 0.5% of spend. This year saw particular success reviewing and implementing the Adobe Creative Cloud site licence ensuring all students have access to the full suite of Adobe products across the University. In addition all staff members now get access to the full suite of Adobe Creative Cloud products both at work and at home.

- The Business Relationship Management team contributed to a number of firsts for the department this year:
  - Working in partnership with colleagues across the University, the team were able to innovate and upgrade the University’s hearing loop estate. The introduction of personalised hearing loop devices across the campus will improve the student experience whilst saving the University over £700,000
  - In the Journalism department the team has helped with the implementation of Adobe Creative Cloud so the same software can be used on both PCs and Macs
  - Working with colleagues in Enterprise Technology Services the team have reviewed the file storage system for assignments
  - The team played a key role in mapping the pan-University requirements for the full Research Data Lifecycle helping to ensure compliance with new regulations emerging from the research councils
  - In partnership with LEaD colleagues, the team played and are continuing to play, a key role in investigating the future of educational technologies at the University ensuring we have the most up-to-date technologies available in our learning spaces. This review will continue through the 2015/16 academic year.
• The IT Project team continued to drive through the IS strategy, including rationalising the product set while also enriching the available facilities. Microsoft Office 365 cloud-based services play an important role in the strategy and 2015 saw a number of new initiatives springing from this enabling technology. Several new projects launched, improving the core processes, making them smoother, more reliable or less costly to run. In particular the introduction of Managed Print Services across campuses rationalised the print estate, simplifying support and is already realising important benefits and cost reductions while delivering a more sustainable and green solution.

• This year saw the move of all IT Communications to our Business Administration team. New processes were developed and a full communications roadmap was produced. The team developed a number of IT wide improvements, reducing reliance upon single points of contact, simplifying and building resilience in processes and increasing the awareness of key activities across line managers in the department. The Business Administration team played an instrumental role in achieving a Platinum Award in the Green Impact Environmental Initiative and were recognised for running the best Water Awareness Campaign at the University.

• The new IT Training Room in Abacus House was opened, enabling the training of up to 10 delegates concurrently. During the year the Business Systems Training team doubled their previous year’s output, training 643 staff across 113 sessions, on 30 different courses, covering a range of systems and processes. The most popular courses were Squiz Matrix, eVision Assessments, SITS Student Records and Form Assembly. New courses were introduced covering Service Now, Solidus and Office 365 technologies. In addition, the training team overhauled their intranet pages utilising the new Team Site functionality. This improved the accessibility of information and the course booking process and led the way in demonstrating how some of our Office 365 technology can be utilised.

• Information Compliance merged with Service Improvement and Business Intelligence creating a single Business Intelligence, Information Compliance and Service Improvement team. This helped to streamline processes, improve the service offered for FOI and DPA requesters and harness data analysis and reporting skills. We are now starting to see the benefits of the reorganisation and augmented skills with FOI requests taking 80% less time to complete than last year. All Information governance policies were consolidated and updated and new DPA and FOI training and awareness courses were developed and launched successfully. Business intelligence continued to develop, utilising data covering customer feedback, technical data, student satisfaction, usage statistics and financial costs as well as comparator benchmarking data. The insights produced enabled the detailed planning of IS workload and led to resource demand forecasting and levelling and predictive data on our technical estate. Service improvement activities resulted in a marked decline in major incidents, providing more stable services and an enhanced user experience.

Interesting to know

• Freedom of Information requests and Data Protection requests continue to rise by 11% year on year. We now handle over 250 requests per year as well as numerous follow up enquiries and clarifications.

• The frequency of major incidents has fallen by 29%, down from 7.5 to 5.5 per month. This is largely due to investment in infrastructure such as storage and servers. This investment combined with up-skilling technicians has resulted in a large decrease in system outages.

• 3,792 questions were answered in the Staff Satisfaction Survey, a rise of 77% from last year. The average score increased to 5.2/6 from 4.8/6 in 2013/14.

• 267 Multi-Function Devices (MFDs) were installed around the University as part of the Managed Print project. This is projected to save around 320 trees per year.

• The Environmental team within Business Management served up 18,750 insects during Sustainability City week.
IT Service

Michael Freeman
Director of IT Service

IT Service is the largest group within the IT Directorate. There are now five constituent teams:

- IT Support Services who support the desktop and AV equipment and manage the Service Desk
- Web Development who manage maintenance and development of the internal and external web sites
- Student Systems who support and develop key systems
- Management Information Systems/Development who provide support and development for our enterprise SAP system, ServiceNow and reporting
- Education, Research and Enterprise Services who are a new team added to the group this year. The team has responsibility for the service delivery of key education, research and enterprises systems, such as Moodle, the library system, lecture capture and repositories for staff profiles.

Highlights of the year

- ServiceNow was rebranded to ‘IT Self Service’ making it consistent for all staff and students. Self-help videos and an updated version of the ‘how to use IT Self Service guide’ were made available. The IT Self Service homepage was updated to make it more user friendly.
- The IT incident category list has been improved by adding further categories, questions and answers, with some answers having been directed to the user guides on ‘Find an answer’. New service request forms such as email distribution list, student software requests and AV equipment loans were added.
- Knowledgebase was rebranded to ‘Find an answer’ making it consistent for all staff and students. All user guides were reviewed and are updated on an ongoing basis.
- The IT Services for Students webpages were migrated to the Squiz content management system and webpages were improved and updated, including information on the new managed print service. Additionally, a new range of promotional materials were produced in collaboration with Marketing, including postcards containing IT information on Office365, Twitter and how to access emails. These postcards were distributed at Fresher’s fair, staff and student inductions and Vision and Strategy student focus groups. They are also available at IT Service centres.
- IT Service now takes part in the Welcome to City staff induction events held three times a year and an IT Service stall was set up at the Fresher’s fair in September. Various guides and resources were handed out and promoted, including IT quick reference guides, password registration information and Twitter documentation. IT Service participated in the student induction talks at Bunhill Row and Northampton Square, where a video presentation was shown to highlight key IT services to new students.
- The MIS/Development team successfully transitioned new systems into service, including: The Student Portal, CitySport memberships and booking payments, Automated Telephone Payments, Student Payment Plan gateway and Asset Accounting.
The Education, Research and Enterprise Services team was officially formed in May 2014 so the 2014/15 academic year was its first full year of operation.

All major systems, including Moodle, Lecture Capture and the Qualtrics survey tool saw more usage than ever before. Throughout the year the team worked with Learning Enhancement and Development and the Centre for Human Computer Interaction Design on our major annual Moodle update, which was implemented at the end of June 2015. The highlight of this was a new course format. As part of our commitment to reducing the number and complexity of systems, we retired the Flash Media Server by migrating content to the Kaltura video platform and helped to migrate School of Health Sciences staff to the new staff profiles system.

The Student Systems team had several key projects during the year. Significant changes to On-line Registration, In-person registration and UKVI compliance processes were completed, enabling our most successful registration support operation yet. The middleware integration was also reviewed and updated resulting in a simpler, more stable and cost effective service.

The Web Development team made major improvements to the website including the new www.city.ac.uk homepage, a completely revamped news section, the ‘Start Here’ section for new students and a site-wide upgrade of our stylesheets.

A key activity for the Web Development team was supporting the clearing process in August. Traffic to the clearing pages was up by 6% and we processed 2% more submissions through the clearing app. The number of visitors to the City website for the year was up by 2.3% to 3.75 million.

Interesting to know

The IT Service Desk received 42,784 calls and processed 65,859 jobs within Service Now, our IT Self-Service Portal.

Our Audio Visual Support team resolved 1,574 incidents during the year. This accounts for less than 2.4% of all jobs received, meaning our audio visual estate has improved reliability.

Our teams have assisted with 311 events at the University and completed 480 hours of filming, photography and editing.

Our Desktop Support team has assisted with 207 moves, with approximately 800 people relocated across the University estates.

752 desktop PCs and 187 laptops have been rolled out to our users.

The number of Twitter followers has increased from 296 to more than 505 since a refresh in March 2015.

All our major systems were used more than ever before, with Moodle having 32 million page views and Lecture Capture facilities being used to record 2,413 sessions.
Enterprise Technology Services

The Enterprise Technology Services team (ETS) has maintained a strong focus on building upon the essential infrastructure remediation and consolidation work of previous years in order to bring sustained stability and reliability to core IT services.

Key services now deliver consistent availability averages of 99.9% and above on an on-going basis, thus ensuring our stakeholder groups enjoy uninterrupted services.

Highlights of the year

- The bandwidth of our Internet connection was increased from 1GB to 2GB, ensuring the dramatic increase in demand for on-line services is delivered seamlessly and with no degradation in connectivity speed. In addition, wi-fi access is now pervasive across the University estate, with the number of wireless access points increased from 365 to over 700.

- The University file server infrastructure was migrated from physical hardware to virtualised servers bringing significant cost, management and environmental benefits. Core services (e.g. SAP and SITS) are now hosted on virtual severs, where resilience and recoverability are significantly improved over physical hosting.

- With a student PC estate of over 1,600 machines it has been possible to achieve a 40% reduction in power consumption through the introduction of power management. This effectively turns the PCs off at night and during other times of non-use.

- The Solidus call centre system was extended to the Student Centre and School of Health Sciences bringing significant improvements to the customer experience, through professional call handling functionality.

- The Franklin Building has seen the delivery of new classrooms, meeting rooms and two floors of office space for Marketing & Communications and DARO. This includes the completion of a new Harvard style lecture theatre and student PC lab.

- During term time wi-fi access has increased to 6,500 concurrent devices at peak times.

- The University downloads around 50TB and uploads 17TB of data each month.

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This year we have implemented improved methods for delivering services, including:

- Transferring the hosting and technical administration of our website and content management system to a third party. This has significantly improved response times and continuous running, as well as reducing our operational overheads. It has also had the welcomed effect of releasing internal staff who can now refocus their efforts towards further innovation of this and other services.

- Implementing a Managed Print Service, allowing all University staff and students to print from any device (PC, tablet, mobile phone etc.) to any managed print device across the University. This has improved service, while reducing the costs of purchasing and maintaining print devices and consumables.

- Migrating SITS and SAP onto infrastructure based on Microsoft technologies. This has rationalised the complexity of our infrastructure, ensuring our core systems continue to be robust, secure and resilient while improving our capacity to respond to increased and changing demands on our service.

Through the implementation of the IT Transformation Programme we have restructured the department to establish a modern and agile service which focuses on the needs of the customer.

The new roles and structures place significant emphasis on innovation, continual improvement and horizon scanning so the University can take early benefit from emerging technologies. We now systematically review the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of our service provision based on feedback from our customers.
It has been another busy year for Library Services. We have improved our NSS satisfaction scores by another 3%, exceeding the sector average with 89%. Once again, this achievement is due to the hard work and dedication of our Library staff as well as a programme of reviewing and refreshing our services, collections and spaces.

Our opening hours have been extended ensuring seven day term-time opening throughout the entire library estate; delighting our users. City Law School has benefitted from the Gray’s Inn Place Library being open every Sunday since January. Our 24/7 exam-time opening was expanded to include Cass LRC for a three week period in January, coinciding with the Northampton Square Library; followed by six weeks from late March to early May coinciding with the main assessment period for Cass Masters students. Northampton Square offered 24/7 opening from April to June, offering 10 weeks of extended hours across the service. This initiative proved very popular and was provided in direct response to student demand across all degree levels and all Schools.

The Graduate School Library Centre relocated to newly refurbished premises in Sebastian Street in April, ahead of the Main Entrance & Lecture Spaces project getting underway. The Centre boasts a wi-fi enabled silent study area augmented by a 12 seat PC lab. At Northampton Square Library, improvement works were undertaken in June following the relocation of the library entrance on level 2, as a result of the University’s Main Entrance project. This enabled four additional networked PCs to be installed and a fresh look for the Printing and Copying zone. Before the spring exams, we added an additional 16 study spaces to the Cass LRC and a casual seating area to the Welcome Zone providing some much needed group interaction space. In response to student feedback, additional study lamps have been added to the Cass LRC Quiet Study Zone. The summer saw a refresh of Gray’s Inn Place Library with improved lighting throughout and more than 200 new chairs for all study spaces, creating a lighter and brighter space for users.

In response to feedback gathered earlier in the year regarding problems of limited study spaces during exam periods, a pilot scheme was introduced in the summer at Northampton Square Library. Students were able to book individual study spaces in the busy Level 5 silent study area for three hour blocks. This service was operated using our group study
room and appointment booking system, LibCal and almost 200 students took advantage of the provision. Another exam period innovation was the posting of 2 hourly updates on study space availability throughout Northampton Square Library via @CityUniLibrary. Feedback on these initiatives was very positive and these will run again during the next exam periods.

- A loan policy review was undertaken with feedback from library user focus groups and benchmarking across the sector. This resulted in increased loan quotas for all library users, a simplification of loan periods and the removal of three day loans. The 24 hour loan stock was also integrated into the book sequence at all library sites. During a review of the low use items in the collection, it was identified that separate short loan stock collections lead to an underuse of the collection and we believe by integrating the collection into one sequence at each library, the books are at the point of need for the students and the use of the collections will increase. These changes have also enabled some repurposing of space and the Northampton Square Library now has a dedicated Audio-Visual area on Level 2, which is home to a refreshed audio-visual collection and viewing facilities. Other changes to the Northampton Square Library include the introduction of a core Law collection at the request of students, who had previously felt disadvantaged during exam periods. The Academic Services team responded to over 146 external enquiries; 3,686 library training workshops and 622 one-to-one advice sessions, one-to-one advice sessions. The Library Service was open for 21,770 hours across its five locations, equivalent to 907 days.

- Library Services invested additional Strategic Investment in new resources such as journal collections, digital archives, databases and books. Several individual archives were purchased for the very high use titles and will increase access for our users back to the first volume. These investments continue to add significant depth to our full text journal collections across all subject areas, ensuring improved resource discovery for all our users. The Library Services have continued utilising innovative user-led purchasing models to provide access to over 80,000 non-purchased e-books from key publishers such as Elsevier, Wiley, Sage, Cambridge University Press and Taylor & Francis. Although all the e-books can be accessed and viewed an unlimited number of times throughout the investment period, only those titles with significant usage are purchased. Over 3,000 e-books were purchased from these collections during the year. The ‘More Books’ and ‘Read for Research’ campaigns which allow students and researchers to order books for the Library collections, continued to attract hundreds of new book requests. Library Services also invested in the Alexander Street Press ‘Evidenced Based Acquisitions’ (EBA) pilot for 2015/16, providing a cross discipline collection of over 30,000 titles of streamed scholarly video content to our users. We now subscribe to Browzine, an app which is optimized for tablet and mobile devices, allowing users to create a favourites book shelf and provides alerts for new issues of journals thereby enabling researchers to stay up to date with areas of interest.

- Several new databases were added to the Library collections, building on the large database investment in previous years of strategic investment funding. The additions include: Statista, FactSet, Henry Stewart Talks, Centre for Economic Policy Research discussion papers, ASTM standards and digital library, Classical Music Scores volume III and Bates Visual Guide. Library Services also purchased several major newspaper archives, including The Financial Times from 1888-2010, ensuring long term access to these high value newspaper database collections.

- This year Library Services celebrated its best result in the Green Impact Awards to date. The Northampton Square and Innovation Centre Libraries were both awarded Platinum and Cass LRC awarded Gold, which was an improvement on the strong results of the previous year.

Interesting to know

- 2,147,008 ebook chapters were viewed, an increase of 51% from last year.
- The Library Service was open for 21,770 hours across its five locations, equivalent to 907 days.
- 10,686 enquiries were answered at the service and help desks at Northampton Square Library.
- Group Study rooms were booked for 20,878 hours, with 2pm - 3pm being the most popular hour.
- The Academic Services team ran 167 induction sessions, 146 library training workshops and 622 one-to-one advice sessions.
- The Academic Services team responded to over 6,500 email enquiries; 40% student enquiries, 55% staff enquiries and 5% external enquiries.
- Our 63 published Library Guides were accessed 157,737 times.