

Driving a Service Excellence Culture



King's College London's Service Excellence initiative was set up to deliver continuous improvement across its professional services.

SUMS was asked to review the initiative to determine how effectively it is supporting King's strategic ambitions, and how well it performs against examples of best practice at other institutions both in the UK and overseas.

The team conducted maturity health checks using the OGC Gateway Process and McKinsey 7S model which provided an initial assessment of Service Excellence. This was followed up with a series of in-depth stakeholder interviews with academics, students, and service staff to test and revise the assessment and to evaluate levels of support for the initiative.

Finally, SUMS consultants conducted a sector analysis of best practice by institutions in the UK, USA and Australia.

The research results show that although King's had committed to multiple improvement projects, the Service Excellence initiative fell below sector benchmarks in the areas of capacity, resources and the integration of the initiative with important related activity such as strategic planning and staff development.

Alongside a large number of operational recommendations, SUMS suggested that, strategically, King's should more ambitiously integrate its business transformation agenda by creating a single hub for continuous improvement within its Directorate of Strategy, Planning & Assurance.

By creating a single hub for improvement, changes can be planned and executed more effectively and in a way that better targets delivery of King's strategic objectives. There are also efficiencies to be gained by co-locating change management resources – and the hub would help future-proof King's so it can be more agile in response to external changes such as the implementation of Diamond's Efficiency Reviews.

David Becker
SUMS Principal Consultant

The depth, insight and overall quality of the SUMS review was invaluable in helping us shape our plans for service transformation. We have already consolidated parts of our professional service provision. Fuller implementation in the coming months will give us a sustainable and high impact change programme that will deliver lasting impact.

Laura Clayton
Director of Planning &
Service Transformation
King's College London

SUMS works for universities. SUMS is different – we really understand the culture of universities and how to bring about change within them.

SUMS consultants combine commercial expertise with a deep understanding of the sector. Our consultants come from the commercial sector – including from the big four consultancy firms – and senior roles within universities. Our principal consultants are a professional team that share their experience of commercial and public sector best practice. We learn from what has worked well elsewhere, from other sectors and within HE. We horizon scan, are aware of the issues that will be impacting UK HE and are developing solutions to help our Members meet the challenges ahead.

SUMS membership gives unique access to other Members and other SUMS international networks: in USA, EU and Australia.



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