

SUMS
Consulting

Ensuring Universities are Fit for the Future

2019





SUMS works **for** universities and is **owned by** universities and we regularly deliver over 100 assignments to universities per year.

The HE sector is facing unprecedented challenges; funding reviews, Brexit, increased competition for students, regulatory changes and pension scheme changes are all contributing to a perfect storm for universities. We understand universities and work across all areas of professional support, strategy and change. Our in-depth knowledge of universities, and specifically how to engage positively with academic areas and bring together their needs with that of professional services, is our key strength. We understand how all areas of a university must work together and be strategically aligned if a university is to deliver on its strategic goals and enhance the student experience and research delivery. We understand how to connect strategy to operations to enable implementation that realises benefits.

Our in-depth knowledge of higher education sets us apart from other consultancies. We thrive on complex problem solving and deliver tangible added value to our members and clients.

Working with SUMS is very straightforward. They understand our sector well and are a rich source of information.

REBECCA TRENGOVE,
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS,
EXTERNAL RELATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE



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About SUMS Consulting

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
KNOWLEDGE • INNOVATION • ENTERPRISE

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

University of Essex

University
of Dundee

BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

UNIVERSITY
OF HULL

NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

KING'S
College
LONDON

LONDON
METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY

Newcastle
University

University of
BRISTOL

St George's
University of London

UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

UCL

UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Trinity
College
Dublin
The University of Dublin

The Open
University

UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

Keele
UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF
SURREY

University of
Hertfordshire UH

UWE
Bristol
University of the
West of England

SOLENT
UNIVERSITY

Queen Mary
University of London

University of
Reading



Our Members and Our Impact

Why become a member?

Our unique membership model offers great value-for-money. SUMS members benefit from:

- > Member-specific consultancy assignments, tailored to individual institutions' needs
- > Participation in collaborative assignments that tackle topical issues and provide insight for the sector on trends and activities
- > Support from our expert staff, who have extensive experience and knowledge of the HE sector
- > Access to our accumulated experience and knowledge of higher education institutions and developments over 30 years
- > Access to our member base of universities across the UK, representing the breadth of UK mission groups, for networking and knowledge sharing
- > Free member events including an annual conference, seminars and workshops to learn about the latest insights from SUMS' membership and beyond
- > Community of Practice Groups to discuss discipline-specific issues in a collaborative and supportive environment with like-minded colleagues
- > Professional development support to help senior leaders operate at

- peak performance within new or evolving roles
- > Knowledge exchange through a series of free publications including briefing papers, best practice guides and case studies
- > Flexible membership options and preferential consultancy rates for any work completed once an institution has used its full complement of membership days.

Working with SUMS feels like a genuine partnership. It's been very refreshing and has helped challenge our thinking.

REBECCA TRENGOVE, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, EXTERNAL RELATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

Why Become a Member?





Bernarde Hyde

CEO

Bernarde has over 20 years' experience working in partnership with universities to help them make meaningful and impactful changes. Understanding the complexities and challenges of higher education is at the core of what Bernarde does – she thrives when identifying the areas where change will have the most impact. She specialises in business models and benefit realisation and has worked extensively across all areas supporting the student journey. Her HE sector knowledge overlays expert consulting skills and commercial awareness gained from working in the retail sector with Debenhams plc and in manufacturing.



Joel Arber

MANAGING CONSULTANT AND GROUP HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Joel brings expertise in business engagement and client services, along with an extensive background in marketing and communications, to help members raise their local, national and international profiles. Joel brings more than a decade of higher education senior management experience to the role with a portfolio including brand, PR, communications, B2B marketing and student recruitment through Director of Marketing and Communications and Pro Vice-Chancellor roles.



Simon Donoghue

MANAGING CONSULTANT

Simon's expertise lies in leading transformational change to deliver performance improvement for universities. He concentrates on the delivery of complex large assignments with an innovation and impact focus. Simon has supported over 25 different universities with large strategy, development and transformational change projects. Simon has over 25 years' higher education leadership, management, consultancy and academic experience.



David Becker

PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT

David specialises in university transformation, combining his expertise in cost efficiency, business design and process improvement with culture change and staff development to encourage modern, effective and value for money professional services. Previously Director of Operations at one of the UK's largest universities, he led a directorate of 200 staff across the areas of campus administration, strategic projects and change.



Claire Taylor

PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT

With expertise in stakeholder engagement, participative process review, quantitative and qualitative benchmarking and activity analysis, Claire translates multifaceted problems into achievable work plans. She has worked in the HE sector for 12 years and has experience across the breadth of professional and administrative activity within UK universities.



Fola Ikpehai

PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT

Fola specialises in process improvement, organisational and business change, training development and delivery, programme and project management, and leadership. She combines her expertise as a coach and mentor with strong analytical skills and a practical understanding of the challenges of implementing benefits-led change in complex organisations. She brings expertise from a varied career in academics and research, local government, management consultancy and transformational change.

Our Team

SUMS' support for the student journey covers the complete spectrum from the initial sparks of interest from prospective students, through to alumni engagement. We work with a range of university departments including marketing, student services, employability, and others to improve student satisfaction, development, wellbeing and retention, leading ultimately, to a better student experience that helps your university stand out in a crowded marketplace and builds loyalty for lifelong relationships and advocacy.

Understanding your students' experience

Within an increasingly competitive, student-driven sector, higher education institutions face the challenge of enhancing student experience, supporting student engagement and measuring student satisfaction. SUMS consultants can support institutions to identify and make best use of every 'touch point' with its prospective, current and alumni student population through specialised student journey mapping. We also work closely with strategic partner, Oracle, to help universities to:

- > Build university specific persona(s) and scenarios
- > Identify and address particular areas of concern in considerable depth
- > Explore the *Art of the Possible* where we illustrate what 'good' could look like in terms of dealing with the moments that matter.

The student journey mapping helped us to focus on what is important for us and where we can make the biggest difference for our students.

**LEE NORRIS, DIRECTOR
STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES OFFICE,
UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST OF ENGLAND, BRISTOL**

Listening and responding to the student voice

It's essential for competitive universities to ensure they listen and respond to the thoughts, views and opinions of students on an educational journey. While universities should have robust and representative student engagement structures – as well as student unions, guilds or associations working to make sure that

students are being treated fairly, and as equal partners in decision making processes – these may not be adequately structured to meet the increasing needs of the student population. We help universities address the student voice as an integral part of ensuring learners receive an outstanding educational and social experience by:

- > Analysing gaps
- > Supporting you in making the case to leadership to prioritise student voice and engagement activities
- > Assessing institutions against a sector-developed maturity model which addresses Teaching and Learning, Governance (and formal structures), Strategy and Planning, Management Information, Measurement and Evaluation, People and Process
- > Presenting good practice elsewhere in the sector and making recommendations for improvement that will enhance the university's approach, mitigating any risks and limiting factors that are inherent within the current arrangements.

Impact of our work

- > Improved understanding of the student population's needs
- > More integrated approaches and processes to understanding and addressing student requirements
- > Solutions that meet requirements while working within financial constraints.

What we do

- > Identify current challenges across strategy, systems, people and processes
- > Advise on models and solutions
- > Benchmark performance against others
- > Develop sports strategies and service provision.

Student support services, mental health and wellbeing

Good support ensures there is a holistic university-wide approach to student support with integrated student support services. There is recognition that if mental health and wellbeing support is to be adequate and sustainable, it has to be anticipatory and help build student resilience.

We help universities to:

- > Baseline the current Student Service offering
- > Inform the development of a business plan that will enable appropriate services to be delivered within the current and expected resource envelope
- > Support student hub development and implementation
- > Review mental health and wellbeing service provision and assess for alignment, accessibility and resilience.

Student Journey

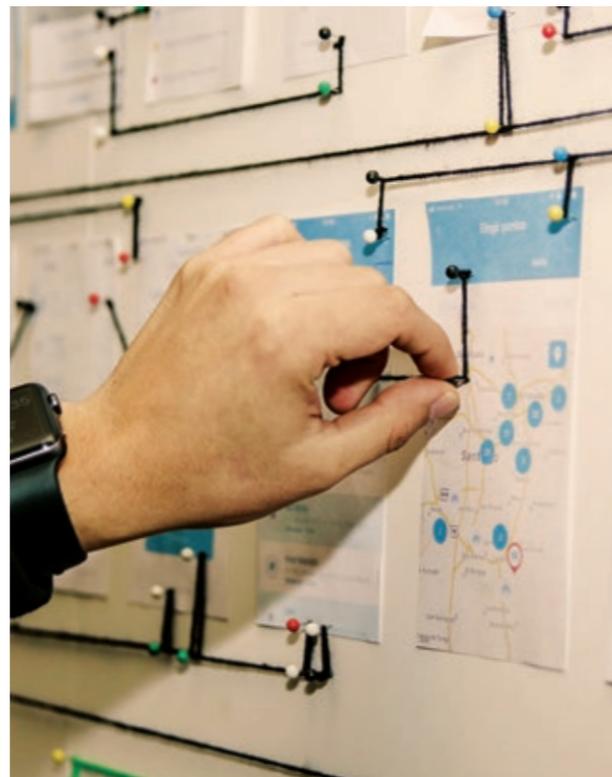
Case
Study

The challenge

The University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol was looking to improve the student digital experience by procuring a new student CRM system. This formed part of their Student Journey Programme, looking at how to support students at each stage of their interaction with the institution and deliver the biggest impact for them.

What happened?

UWE hosted a session of the SUMS change management Community of Practice Group, focussing on student journey mapping. SUMS's strategic partner, Oracle, ran a series of workshops with attendees looking at specific categories of students and their experience, from potential prospect right through to alumni status. Lee Norris, Director of the Strategic Programmes Office, and his team then used the mapping process to look at the experience



of the whole range of UWE students, considering what their needs might be at each stage. UWE's business change managers also attended the Oracle workshops in order to understand the process and use it for continuous improvement purposes.

The outcome

The targeted journeys that were developed during the process, such as for international students coming to the UK for the first time and for young people leaving care and coming to university, helped to focus on the best way to support an experience that led to the best outcomes for those students. This has been seen from recruitment through to retention. These journeys fed into the requirements for the CRM system, which has since been successfully procured, as well as providing a broader context for considering how systems, processes and support for students could best be structured.

Student journey mapping has put their experience at the heart of how we interact with them at every stage, from prospect to alumni. SUMS gave us an outward-looking approach to new ideas and prompted us to think differently.

LEE NORRIS, DIRECTOR
STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES OFFICE

Student journey mapping at the University of the West of England



With financial sustainability and growth continuing as key drivers for institutions across the sector, SUMS

Consulting works with a range of universities to operate more effectively in a competitive environment in order to deliver improved outcomes for students. We undertake data capture and analysis to provide informed options and recommendations. We recognise that there are varying factors at play:

- > Some universities are already facing student recruitment challenges which are becoming more widespread
- > Others are driven by the need to maintain current success in relation to their direct competitors
- > Some universities are actively seeking to further diversify their income footprint to mitigate their financial exposure but need to adapt resources, processes and structures to achieve this.

We support institutions to improve efficiency whilst improving student outcomes by identifying cashable savings and ensuring universities can deliver value for money and maximum return on investment.

Spend and resource data

We measure performance of individual institutions:

- > We assess the quality of their service delivery against the investment universities are making, across both academic functions and professional support services
- > We carry out benchmarking projects, looking at categories of spend at comparator institutions and the results that those competitors achieve from their investment
- > We use spend and return on investment data for the whole sector and at a granular level – we have access to data at these levels via our sister business unit, the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC).

We also review universities' performance based on organisational structure and head count. We assess how high-performing institutions are achieving results in terms of internal organisation and resource. This provides indicators for under-

What we do

- > Expert support for targeted reductions in specific service areas
- > Performance analysis
- > Benchmarking performance and costs
- > Identify opportunities for cost reduction and/or income generation
- > Support to identify and prioritise areas for process review.

performing institutions:

- > They may find they are over-resourced, inefficient and spending unnecessarily
- > They may be under-resourced and inefficient due to lack of investment
- > Or they may even discover they are adequately resourced but focussing their efforts in ineffective ways.

Evidence-based decision making

By making direct comparisons with competitors

We looked at other providers, but their approach seemed too fixed for us. SUMS consultants take standard approaches and tailor them to our particular needs.

HELEN GALBRAITH, ACADEMIC REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY, KEELE UNIVERSITY

Impact of our work

- > Evidence-based decision making
- > Real time data and comparison
- > Innovative ideas for income generation.
- > Improved student outcomes and experience, from recruitment to graduation and beyond, through efficient organisation.

in the sector, our benchmarking projects:

- > Research the approaches taken at other universities and how these relate to benefit realisation
- > Identify trends and best practice, and present recommendations
- > Highlight how universities are performing
- > Identify opportunities for improvements
- > Offer an independent evidence base for the necessary but difficult decisions that institutions have to take, such as closing or merging schools and restructuring professional services.

Changing sector regulation is driving greater pressure from university boards of governors to understand how their university is performing. These groups often bring a commercial understanding of efficiency and value for money. SUMS consultants can help Vice Chancellors and University Executive Boards to provide a full and comparative picture of their position, using real-time data and findings from across the sector.

Efficiencies and Value for Money

Case
Study

The challenge

Keele University, in line with much of the HE sector, was facing growing cost pressures. Previous approaches to reducing budgets had seen schools and professional services asked to decrease costs by a standard percentage across the board, but this approach was proving too blunt to realise the real change that was required to make a significant longer-term impact. There was therefore a need for a more nuanced approach to cutting costs and identifying more efficient ways of working.

What happened?

SUMS consultants carried out a benchmarking exercise for all schools and professional services, looking at costs and outcome data and comparing them internally across the University as well as against external competitor institutions. The consultants worked with Helen Galbraith, Academic



Registrar and Secretary, and her team to identify how to visualise the large wealth of data in a way that told a clear story of where the opportunities to make efficiencies lay.

The outcome

The resulting scorecards were used as the basis for 3-year planning conversations and to take ownership of the actions required to reduce costs at the university. They also enabled investment in some areas where the cards indicated that this would give an appropriate return. In addition, the data provided credible evidence for decision-making in areas such as vacancy approval and fulfilment.

Longer-term, the team at Keele are using the scorecards to identify system and process changes that will deliver on the University's ambitions. They are now able to prioritise transformation programmes for the greatest impact.

We do not want to compromise on our values and so we want to be realistic about where we can grow whilst maintaining that vision. SUMS helped us work though where we could make efficiencies without cutting who we are.

**HELEN GALBRAITH,
ACADEMIC REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY**

Identifying efficiency opportunities at Keele University

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t a time of multi-faceted, ongoing change for the sector as a whole, as well as for individual institutions, we are working with our members and clients to develop a strong foundation of change strategy, plans, capacity and capability. We recognise that for any transformation programme to be fully effective, universities need to have a clear overall strategy and plan in place.

Effective transformation and change takes place in the context of highly successful and ambitious academic strategies, where consultation and understanding of ambitions,



drivers and opportunities are critical to the success of transformation initiatives.

Developing the right approach

The approach an institution takes to managing change can make all the difference to the success or failure of transformation programme outcomes and impact. Our consultants facilitate in-house conversations, using their considerable sector expertise and experience to make recommendations.

We work with senior teams to:

- > Identify common themes and challenges across schools, faculties and departments, reviewing existing approaches and exploring options; this helps to build shared understanding of issues and potential solutions
- > Agree the high-level vision and roadmap for the development of change management, with clearly defined interim states that represent increasing maturity in this area
- > Develop a draft institutional approach, working in partnership with in-house teams to refine, develop and get wider approval and commitment.

Acting as a critical friend to change teams

Our consultants' extensive understanding of the higher education sector context with its

Impact of our work

- > Improved capability and capacity of change teams to operate more efficiently providing process and cashable savings
- > Delivery of measurable and tangible benefits as part of change programmes
- > Increased investment in resource and recruitment of new team members with specialist expertise
- > Greater buy-in across the institution as a result of shared vision and understanding

current opportunities and challenges means that they are well placed to act as a trusted friend to institutions planning transformational change. We advocate for the success of our clients' and members' programmes by asking provocative questions and acting as a sounding board.

We will:

- > Have frank, open and supportive conversations with leaders about their institution's current change management maturity
- > Provide a different perspective through challenge, drawing on sector expertise and understanding of the HE context
- > Provide information and advice to project managers and leadership teams who may find themselves too close to a topic to see it objectively
- > Provide ongoing mentoring, support and challenge for the development of new initiatives.

Building change management capacity

We know that to manage change effectively, institutions need to have the best people in the right roles and with the right skills for their strategic aims; it is vital that these individuals work within well-designed structures and with appropriate governance.

Our consultants work with senior leaders and in-house change management teams to develop and articulate the mandate, scope and ways of working for change programmes. We can:

- > Identify and initiate appropriate governance and committee structures for change programmes that meet long-term ambitions.

Transformation and Change

- > Improve the capability and capacity of change teams to understand their roles and ways of working within a newly defined change management approach
- > Provide executive education for key stakeholders in order that they understand the “why” as well as the “how” of change at their institution
- > Embed institution-wide collaboration by helping central teams to establish, energise and influence wider communities of local change leaders and managers.

Our consultants work with key stakeholders to build the case for investment in change capacity and to carry out pilot projects that demonstrate the benefits of effective change management. Where necessary, we assist institutions to recruit staff with the right mix of skills and experience.

What we do

- > Provide support in preparing, implementing and reviewing change projects and programmes
- > Explore change management gaps
- > Create a shared acknowledgement of the issues and develop actions to resolve these
- > Analyse approaches to change at other universities and develop case studies to demonstrate high levels of maturity for our clients.



Case
Study

The challenge

Following significant changes over the last few years and with more challenges in the future, the University Executive Board recognised that the University's approach to change needed to improve. The staff survey in 2017 had also identified change management as an area where progress was required.

What happened?

The SUMS consultant facilitated in-depth discussions around the vital success factors for meaningful change with key leaders at the university, engaging in one-to-one interviews and a structured workshop. SUMS also provided a framework for change maturity to help guide those discussions and to encourage the university to undertake a deep analysis for how the issues it faced in this area could be addressed in future projects. The bespoke

change maturity framework was tailored for the HE sector, but based on substantial data and research from across the globe, incorporating best practice principles from established and recognised change methodologies. Covering areas as diverse as leadership and governance, to assessing the impact of change on processes, policies and people, this approach helped Reading to identify where they were and what activities were needed to enhance their level of change maturity.

The outcome

The SUMS work provided a rich mixture of independent observation and insight to use in the development of an improved approach to change at the university. With a better understanding of the various components of change management, the university set up a Change Management Working



Group (CMWG), looking at improving the university's performance across all the areas identified through the maturity framework in a coordinated way. In particular, the university is beginning to incorporate continuous improvement as part of its approach to change; in a constantly-evolving environment this will prove especially helpful. The university is now working with SUMS again to support the activities of the CMWG to deliver effective change at Reading.

It's hard to imagine where else you would get something as useful as the support from SUMS. You don't have to waste time explaining how the HE sector works. They already know the extent to which universities are different.

RACHEL STEWART, DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND STRATEGY OFFICE (PSO)

Understanding change at the University of Reading

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imetabling and space management are at the core of university life for many. The way that students experience these elements has a significant impact on their higher education experience and satisfaction levels overall.

We know that universities must make efficient use of their space just like any other resource, being aware of constraints, variables and plans. SUMS consultants work with institutions to define their current situation, future requirements and underlying principles, then use their considerable experience of solutions, systems and models to recommend one that will work best to deliver that institution's ambitions for student experience.

Student experience

SUMS consultants encourage the teams they work with to be agile, being both reactive to unexpected situations that could affect their students, and proactive in identifying the ways in which other changes at their institutions may impact on timetabling and space management.



Impact of our work

- > Improved space utilisation and student experience
- > An approach that works well now and into the future
- > Clear articulation of interdependencies across diverse functions
- > Workable timetables that meet constraints and requirements
- > Access to a wide pool of knowledge
- > Access to a network across and beyond the sector.

The consultants appointed to engage with the Trinity project team quickly grasped the complexities of the curriculum changes driving the requirements for a new approach to our timetabling, and designed a solution to meet Trinity's needs.

MARY MCMAHON, PROJECT OFFICER, TRINITY EDUCATION PROJECT, TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Timetabling and Space Management

We work with universities to plan for future scenarios, such as:

- > Considering what will happen to teaching and learning activities when a building is decommissioned because it is no longer fit for its original research purpose
- > Identifying a timetabling model and principles that will maintain a positive student experience during investment in the world-leading facilities of the future.

Effective timetabling and space management activity is essential for long-term sustainability of the student population, which could otherwise suffer if student experience dips during building works.

What we do

- > Identifying current challenges, symptoms and causes
- > Advice on models and solutions
- > Timetabling health checks
- > Planning for future scenarios, such as decommissioning a building or introducing language modules for all students
- > Creating space optimisation strategies
- > Implementation support
- > Support for exam planning, agile working and the delivery of the classrooms of the future
- > Timetabling and Space Management Seminars.

Articulating interdependencies

Our consultants use data and performance metrics to identify the specific details of space and timetabling issues. We work with:

- > Central planning teams
- > Estates and Facilities Departments
- > Institution leaders

Our knowledge gives us credibility with both timetabling and planning teams and senior managers.

Because we work collaboratively with teams and departments across the university as a whole, we are able to articulate interdependencies. We recognise that staff working internally in one team and looking at the issue from a single perspective are not necessarily in a position to see these connections. The independent nature of SUMS consultants leaves us uniquely positioned to articulate the impact of these interdependencies across diverse functions and on the way that students will experience their time at the institution.

Sector-leading knowledge

The in-depth knowledge that SUMS consultants have of space management tools and timetabling models enables us to share best practice from across the HE sector and beyond. SUMS Consulting is a sector-leader in these areas due to 30 years' experience in the field, leading to a deep knowledge of pedagogy developments, data requirements and change in the sector. We developed and now use a sector-based maturity model to help institutions recognise their current position and identify improvements.



Case
Study

The challenge

The world in which Trinity's graduates will live and work is ever-changing. The University has launched a programme of initiatives to transform the undergraduate curriculum to ensure its students are provided with a solid disciplinary foundation in addition to a number of core graduate attributes. This has resulted in a set of curriculum principles and a new undergraduate programme architecture that require a wide range of modules to be available to all students.

What happened?

With the programme architecture defined, focus changed to understand how it could be delivered. To attract applicants to new joint honours programmes and to attract new visiting students from overseas, Trinity needed to be clear about which pathway and modules would be available through the timetable. At this point they asked SUMS to help them make their plans a reality. SUMS consultants worked with the project team at Trinity to understand the drivers for this new curriculum. They looked at current policies,

processes, systems and performance metrics, to understand the existing approach to timetabling and its end result.



Then, drawing on their experience and knowledge of the HE sector, the SUMS consultants considered which timetabling model could best serve the desired, more flexible curriculum. They were able to advise the team at Trinity that there was no one model that would meet all their needs; this provided a useful focus for the team to clarify their main aim for the redesign.

The outcome

After careful consideration of the impact of each timetabling model, they recognised that the most important thing was to be able to clearly set out in advance which module combinations would be available to undergraduates. Once this driver became clearer, the SUMS consultants were able to put together a recommended approach, using a partial block approach. This was signed off by the University governance structures over the summer of 2018.

The new timetabling model is being implemented during the 2018/19 academic year and SUMS continues to support Trinity with the implementation.

We look forward to continuing this highly effective and rewarding association with SUMS Consulting as we move towards transitioning ongoing developments into a new era of Trinity education.

MARY MCMAHON, PROJECT OFFICER,
TRINITY EDUCATION PROJECT

Redesigning the curriculum
at Trinity College, Dublin



We are expertly positioned to help institutions address the priorities for students and staff today and in

the future. We support universities to review, develop and plan for a wide range of learning products, bringing a demand-based future-focus to product development, particularly for universities that have not traditionally approached teaching and learning in this way.

Institutions choose to work with us due to our deep understanding of the different cultures and approaches within the sector. We are familiar with the way that universities operate internally and externally, as well as the challenges and sensitivities of varied drivers and priorities within the curriculum environment. We are skilled at navigating the cost and power bases within organisations in an effective and collaborative way, driving institutions towards an agreed end point.

Opportunities and potential in teaching

Teaching and learning is undergoing continuous change across the sector; students are increasingly making demands in relation to the disciplines they wish to study, the delivery of that content and the outcomes they expect to achieve. Our reviews and benchmarking exercises assist institutions in assessing:

- > Opportunities for accredited and non-accredited programmes
- > Shape and structure of the postgraduate academic year
- > Potential application of presence-based and online teaching models.



We also carry out collaborative projects on behalf of our members to look at a number of hot topic issues for the sector – most recently, 2-year accelerated degree programmes.

Commercialisation of learning products

SUMS consultants assist institutions to utilise a credible, evidence-based approach to the commercialisation of their learning product ideas. In some cases, our assessment has enabled institutions to draw the conclusion that their idea is not viable and they have been able to halt development before expending a significant amount of time or expense.

As the starting point for each project, we identify the university’s drivers for product development:

- > For some institutions this is academic activity driven, with a desire to follow up on internal research strengths and interests;
- > Others are student-demand driven and wish to

What we do

- > Undergraduate and postgraduate portfolio reviews
- > Curriculum and pathways development
- > Virtual learning environments
- > Student information system review and implementation
- > Measuring the impact of curriculum change on processes.

Impact of our work

- > Teaching and learning models that deliver value for money outcomes for students
- > Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that are affordable to run
- > Working in partnership with consultants who understand the HE world and its challenges and opportunities
- > Clarity about viable, realistic ways forward for your institution
- > Identification of latent demand and how to capitalise on it.

explore current market trends and learn from horizon-scanning of the marketplace.

We also work with institutions to consider factors such as:

- > How teaching activity fits with other university activities, such as research, enterprise and student services
- > Cost implications of different products and delivery models
- > The governance structures that an approach will require.

We work with our clients and members to look at the overall way in which the complex activities align and support student experience and outcomes.

Teaching and Learning

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ith many UK universities competing over the same markets, we continue to see growing investment in professional, specialist marketing and communications functions and activity. There has been increasing recognition of the strategic importance of the function in relation to student fee income, in particular. Universities are also becoming more aware of the importance of a distinctive identity and brand in successfully establishing their position in the sector.

Best practice in student recruitment

SUMS consultants work with university marketing and communications teams to review their recruitment activity and campaigns, providing advice on how best to focus marketing and communications strategies, resources and people to achieve greater impact.

It is a powerful position for Marketing and Communication Directors to understand how their peers' functions are investing, structured and, crucially, performing. Universities have been especially keen to understand best practice in the international student recruitment market, as

Working with SUMS is very straightforward. They understand our sector well and are a rich source of information. Our consultant listens to us and responds to our needs, but at the same time, she is really skilled at questioning us to get to the core of the matter without being fobbed off.

REBECCA TRENGOVE, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, EXTERNAL RELATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

this is a key driver for many of their strategies and future ambitions. SUMS consultants' extensive knowledge of innovative approaches and best practice elsewhere in the HE sector and beyond enables them to provide in-depth assessments of competitor and comparator institutions.

Brand and reputation review

We work with institutions to assess the effectiveness of their brand and reputation in their target markets, benchmarking against other institutions as appropriate. This is helping

- university teams to ensure their brand:
- > Accurately reflects who they are and where their strengths lie
 - > Is supported by strong core messages that resonate with stakeholders
 - > Provides tailored messaging to core target groups, particularly in regards to overseas markets
 - > Strengthens their reputation.

Our consultants highlight areas for development and provide recommendations for enhancing an institution's brand.



Marketing and Communications

Impact of our work

- > Internal business case for investment and resource
- > More successful marketing and student recruitment campaigns
- > Clearer understanding of the markets that will bring the best results for their strategic aims
- > Increased confidence
- > Culture change that increasingly recognises the contribution that the Marketing function makes.

Team development

Universities want to be sure that their marketing teams are structured in an effective way and, since they are often relatively new teams, to feel reassured and build their confidence. By using the marketing and communications maturity model framework, SUMS consultants are able to:

- > Support Marketing and Communications Directors in assessing the maturity of their functions.
- > Build relationships with the teams and challenge them to explore their current reality and future objectives as fully as possible
- > Hold the teams to focus at a strategic and team development level.

The framework was developed in partnership with 10 university marketing directors to ensure it met the challenges and demands of the sector.

What we do

- > Strategic reviews
- > Benchmarking assessments of comparative resources and good practice in peer/competitor institutions.
- > Market research
- > Marketing Directors' Community of Practice Group, bringing together senior marketing and communications staff to share ideas, tactics and strategies
- > Maturity Model for Marketing and Communications
- > Workshops and training.

Investment based on credible insight

Benchmarking marketing and communications functions against other institutions is a key way in which teams can demonstrate the value they are adding to their universities. Input from strategic reviews and benchmarking reports has equipped Marketing Directors to:

- > Put together compelling internal business cases for resource and investment, using the credible, independent data and insight from activity with SUMS consultants
- > Have strategic conversations with senior university leaders, with significant success
- > Experience a greater understanding amongst their senior academic colleagues about the difference they make as a professional function.



Case
Study

The challenge

The University of Dundee had ambitious international student recruitment targets in place, but suffered from lower applicant awareness in key overseas markets than other comparator institutions. The Marketing team was also relatively newly-established and needed to build confidence. A change in ways of working across the institution was needed in order to deliver the goal of increased international student numbers.

What happened?

Rebecca Trengove, Director of Marketing and Communications, asked SUMS Consulting to carry out a benchmarking exercise looking at the approach to international marketing campaigns at direct competitor and comparator institutions. After telephone interviews with these other institutions, the SUMS consultant provided a report with headline findings, as well as examples of the specific actions that these competitors were undertaking.

The marketing team at Dundee also used the SUMS marketing maturity model to assess their level of development, taking part in a team evaluation session facilitated by a SUMS consultant. This temperature check enabled them to explore different perspectives and build as a team.

The outcome

Rebecca and her team put together a successful business case for more investment in the Marketing



function at Dundee, using insight into best practice elsewhere to show the difference that this could make. This increased investment, combined with more effective deployment of team resources and use of international advertising campaigns, has already led to an increase in international Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Undergraduate student numbers. PGT numbers in particular have increased above the rates for the sector as a whole.

The marketing team are also working differently, able to have more productive conversations and build relationships across the institution.

"The universities involved provided us with some powerful insights about their international student marketing strategies. The fact that as SUMS consultants we combine knowledge of both the subject matter and the sector does really help with their willingness to share within the benchmarking group."

Susannah Randall,
SUMS Associate Consultant

Working with SUMS has enabled us to become more confident and to make a better case for investment in marketing activities.

REBECCA TRENGOVE, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Benchmarking international student recruitment marketing

Digital technology offers a wide range of benefits and opportunities to universities, from marketing and business development, to student experience and income generation. SUMS Consulting has continued to work with institutions to assess what a digital approach looks like for them and to plan their journey to realise the strategic outcomes they need.

With technology and tools set to continue developing over time, SUMS consultants recognise the importance of working with universities to put together coherent and strategic long-term plans, based on outcomes rather than technology. In this way, we know they will reap the benefits in the shorter-term and continue to do so into the future.

Beyond technology

We have provided a focus for university teams to

fully explore why they plan to introduce digital tools, assisting them to articulate the real-world gains of using these tools. We ask the questions that prompt them to go beyond the face value of adopting new technology and tools, so that they uncover the deeper, strategic reasons behind going digital. Through facilitated conversations, workshops and reports, we make sure they keep student and stakeholder requirements at the heart of their digital programmes, working back to the technical functionality that will deliver those needs.

Digital transformation is about more than IT systems. Through discussions, reports and exploratory workshops we have encouraged, challenged and supported teams to consider the culture, processes, governance and competencies they need to make their ambitious

What we do

- > Diagnosing current position and identifying future requirements
- > Formulating long-term strategic digital plans
- > Persona development
- > Capability and competency audits and development
- > Governance recommendations and advice
- > Web redesign and development
- > Digital Transformation Seminar.

Impact of our work

- > Coherent, strategic long-term digital transformation plans
- > Improved user experience and outcomes, thanks to detailed, HE-relevant personas for use when designing digital tools
- > Wider understanding within your institution of the need to view digital programmes as being about more than just IT
- > Improved digital competencies, processes and governance at your institution.

strategic plans a reality. The SUMS methodology has helped institutions to identify their baseline and pushed them to identify the right digital approach to take things forward.

Meaningful improvements

Our sector knowledge means we are comfortable and competent building relationships with a wide range of university stakeholders. We have worked in partnership with strategic programme teams, student services teams, business improvement teams, marketing and communication teams and IT teams. Our understanding of digital transformation for universities has allowed us to support meaningful improvements, recognising that institutions need to connect and engage digitally with a wide range of end users in order to survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive operating environment.

There are a wide range of approaches to Digital Transformation; in part this reflects the variety of institutions, but it also appears to indicate that there is no established roadmap for universities to follow.

SUMS WORKSHOP - DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: SHARING SUCCESSES

Case Study

The challenge

Having established a set of digital principles and protocols in 2013, the University's website was developed with a navigation designed around the user journey. Content was organised in a way that visitors to the site might expect to find it, rather than following the University's own internal structures. Over time, however, internal pressure was mounting to publish content on the homepage or 'sites within sites' which did not fit with this principle of a website for the consumer; this risked damaging the user experience if it became harder to find what they were looking for amongst content that did not interest them. The University also wanted to maintain a single site that was responsive to users of different browsers and devices.

What happened?

Director of Engagement, Phil Chapman, decided to invite SUMS Consulting to carry out a project using live site traffic analytics to provide in-depth insight into website user journeys. SUMS Associates from *Uprated* looked at information

such as where visitors were coming into the site, users' progress towards goals, where and after how long they exited and how they used the



pages they found. This rich data was then used to demonstrate footfall around the site and to make user and site design improvements which were evidence-based.

In a second phase of activity, SUMS consultants *Uprated* worked in partnership with the in-house marketing team, IT team, and the University's Content Management tool provider to develop a more responsive site, again based on user journey insight, which users could access from any electronic device.

The outcome

The evidence from the analytics enabled Marketing Manager, Kate Stanbury, and her project team to have constructive conversations with their internal web editors and senior leaders about improvements to the website which would be journey-led not structure-led. These improvements delivered a better user experience as demonstrated by a range of success metrics. Thanks to the new navigation, visitors found important student recruitment-focused pages

I used SUMS to provide data and insight because I know I can trust their experience as practitioners in the HE sector

PHIL CHAPMAN, DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT

in fewer clicks. The project's focus on giving prominence to key actions (particularly those that resulted in data capture) led to increases in users requesting a personalised prospectus (+131%), initiating a live chat (+14%), clicking the apply via UCAS button (+12%) and clicking to apply direct (+13%). Users also used the search function less, again indicating that they were finding what they needed intuitively without having to ask where it was.

Another big win for the University was finding that a single site could be built to cater to the needs of its target audience, no matter what device they were using to access it. This gave site visitors choice and control in how they accessed the site and ensured an improved experience on all devices.

Using data insight to evolve a user-centric website



We continue to build on the professional procurement support, advice and

guidance offered to our members through our Procurement Shared Service (PSS) team. This area of work has enabled us to:

- > Provide support for skills development and capacity-building to a range of institutions with less experienced procurement teams
- > Step in to assist procurement teams who needed more resource for a specific time period or project
- > Promote improved delivery of procurement strategies at individual institutions and across the sector as a whole, through our Procurement Maturity Assessments (PMA)

Professional support

We provided resource support to a number of institutions during the year. Our PSS consultants are experienced in higher education sector procurement and are able to work flexibly across a range of services.

Projects this year included:

- > Interim support following the departure of a Category Manager. This enabled the in-house team to move their high priority projects forward while still recruiting for a full-time team member
- > Ongoing mentoring support and advice for a

Our associates have a range of skills and are able to complete short and long-term assignments; it is key to understand exactly what an institution is looking for. This is always our starting point, so we can respond to our members' needs.

**JUDITH RUSSELL,
PSS OPERATIONAL MANAGER**

- > procurement manager who has less experience of the sector and works at a smaller institution without internal peers. This involved discussion and reactive advice as the need arose
- > Working with a member institution to develop

best practice specifications for a waste management services tender. The consultant ensured that the documents accurately reflected all aspects of the required service, including the member's learnings from working with their incumbent supplier.

Procurement Maturity Assessments

The national PMA programme managed by PSS continued to provide an opportunity to stand back and review procurement from both a strategic and operational perspective. The structured, evidence-based assessments provide an action plan for improvement, created jointly by the institution and the assessor.

During 2017/18:

- > 13 assessments were carried out
- > The programme reached 100 participating HE institutions
- > 35% of participants are now at planned level (there are 4 maturity levels: developing, tactical, planned and superior)
- > 8 institutions achieved the superior level

Impact of our work

- > Having a clear action plan for improvement
- > Understanding how they are performing compared to other institutions
- > Raising the profile of procurement at your institution, due to an independent assessment that can be presented to senior management
- > Improved skills and capacity.

What we do

- > Provide professional interim resource support
- > Manage the PMA and PMA+ programmes
- > Provide support for skills development and capacity-building
- > Benchmarking projects.

- > 54% of Non-Pay Spend is being managed by HEIs working at planned or superior maturity levels.

New assessment tools

We are introducing more assessments to support our members in developing and improving their activities:

- > PMA+ programme. This will drive further improvements across the maturity scale. It will make use of an updated, streamlined question set and enhanced guidance through the process. In response to member feedback, it will also support greater engagement between procurement and senior management teams
- > VfM Procurement Assessment. The sector is under increasing scrutiny and demand to demonstrate value for money, so this assessment will provide a comprehensive evaluation of your institution's third party spend. It will identify opportunities for increased efficiencies and process improvement, supporting compliance, reporting and ultimately, the delivery of greater value for money
- > We also plan to relaunch our Procurement Resource Support to ensure that more members are aware of the services they can benefit from.

Procurement Services

Academic Finance
University of London

Academic Performance Management
King's College London

Academic Workload Management Implementation Project Review
Birmingham City University

Academic Workload Model, Department of Continuing Education
University of Oxford

Accelerated Degrees
Collaborative

Accommodation H&S compliance
University of Surrey

Admissions
University of Hull

Briefing Paper on Accelerated Degrees
Solent University

Capital Projects' Project Management
The University of Dundee

Careers and Enterprise
Queen Mary University of London

Change Management Approach
University of Reading

Change Management Team Development Support
Nottingham Trent University

Change support
University of Leicester

CMA Compliance
University of Hull

CMA Compliance Review
University of Surrey

CMA Return
The University of Dundee

Committee and Sponsor Training (Programme & Project Management)
University of Essex

Complaint Process
Keele University

Conference Costing Model
University of Surrey

Continued Project and Change Support
University of Leicester

Customer Service Across Professional Services
University of Essex

Design and Development of Project Methodology
University of Oxford

Development of Process Innovation Capability
University of Brighton

Digital Campus Project
University of Wolverhampton

Digital Services
St George's, University of London

Digital, Creative and Cultural Vision
University of Essex

Disability Support
University of Hull

eAssessment
Queen Mary University of London

Efficiencies and Benchmarking
Keele University

English Language Requirements and Recruitment
University of Reading

Equality and Diversity
University of the West of England, Bristol

Estates Business Administration
University of Oxford

Estates Strategic Planning
University of Oxford

Estates: Information, Space and Options Review
University of Oxford

FMHS Service Delivery
Keele University

Supporting Global Refugees
University College London

Human Resources and Organisation Development
The University of St Andrews

Identification of Priority Areas for Process Improvement
Birmingham City University

Improving Graduation
University of Hull

Informing a Digital Programme
London Metropolitan University

Informing Student Policy Group
The Open University

International Postgraduate Fees
University of Reading

International Student Recruitment Marketing Benchmarking
The University of Dundee

Kingston and St George's, Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education Invoicing Process
St George's, University of London

Legal Services Review
The University of St Andrews

Library Review
London Metropolitan University

Mapping Mental Health and Wellbeing Support
The University of Dundee

Medical Education Timetabling and Space Management
Queen Mary University of London

Module Viability
University College London

Overseas Recruitment Resourcing and Activity
The University of Dundee

Parking Review
Oxford Brookes University

Post Implementation Reviews and Benefit Realisation
University of Bristol

Professional Development Support
London Metropolitan University

Professional Development Support for Humanities 17/18
University of Oxford

Recruitment and Marketing
University of Aberdeen

Redesigning Student Communications
University of Hull

Research Support Office Process Review
University of Edinburgh

Review of Counselling
St George's, University of London

Review of Planning Process
University of Hertfordshire

Scholarships Review
King's College London

Scholarships to Drive International Recruitment
University of Reading

Senior Management Team Strategy Workshop Facilitation - 2018
Keele University

Shape and Structure of the PGT Academic Year
University of Bristol

Short Course Planning
University College London

Sport Organisation
Oxford Brookes University

Student Experience Journey Mapping
Collaborative

Student Hub Planning
University of Bristol

Student Regulations
Keele University

Student Services
University of Leicester

Student Services Benchmarking
Birmingham City University

Support Development of Registry Strategy
Nottingham Trent University



Support for Efficiency Programme
University of London

Support for Faculty of English Language and Literature Away Day
University of Oxford

Support for Integrated Planning
Keele University

Support for Joint Honours Review
University of Hertfordshire

Support for New Sport Build
Solent University

Support for Postgraduate Taught Portfolio Review
Keele University

Support for SITS Implementation Programme
Queen Mary University of London

Support Student Services in Developing Future Strategies
Nottingham Trent University

Teaching Space Management Good Practice
Sheffield Hallam University

Timetabling and Space Management
Trinity College Dublin

Timetabling Implementation Support
Trinity College Dublin

Timetabling Support
Goldsmiths, University of London

Timetabling Support
The University of Dundee

Transformation
University of Wolverhampton

TT Health Check
University of Hull

University Committees
St George's, University of London

Viability of the IT Futures Unit
University of Wolverhampton

Widening Participation Audit
University of Hull

Assignment Examples

Financial Statements

Copies of Southern Universities Management Services audited Directors' Report and Financial Statements are available from sums@reading.ac.uk or on our website at www.sums.org.uk.

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