



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Council Oversight Group: Student Lifecycle Project (Meeting held on 7 May 2019)

Chair: Mr Adrian Belton

Secretary: Mrs Rebecca Barker/Mr David Swinn

1. Background

In February 2016, Council received and approved a proposal to establish a Group to oversee the Student Lifecycle Project, together with terms of reference and membership.

The Oversight Group is chaired by Mr Adrian Belton and focuses on governance oversight matters, while the more detailed work associated with the programme is the domain of a Programme Board (chaired by the Director of Academic Services) and an Executive Sponsorship Group (chaired by the Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor).

This project represents a significant opportunity for the University but its large scale and complexity also entails significant risk and necessitates the engagement and support of a wide-range of colleagues across the organisation. The project has been highlighted as a priority project by UEB, alongside the Programme Level Approach initiative.

2. Progress to date

The Appendix to this report sets out an update on progress and project timelines, including a timeline of key releases.

The Group met on 7 May 2019 to discuss the following:

- 2.1 Project Update and project timelines: An update on the progress since the previous meeting and plans for the next six months. A longer-term plan to the closure of the project, in October 2020, is being finalised.

Good progress has been made to date, in particular the successful release of two pieces of functionality. The project is running in line with budget with unspent elements largely allocated to October 2020. Unallocated and contingency funds are expected to be used (in particular to mitigate risks identified by PwC). A key challenge is the ability to recruit and retain staff to key posts, with this challenge and its mitigation having the potential to impact on budget over the remaining term.

The launch of several key features has been deferred to Autumn 2020 (from Sept 2019) to enable greater engagement, ensure operational readiness and further reflect on the requirements of the (now delayed by a year) national HESA Data Futures project. This rescheduling will also help to maximise the synchronisation of the project with other major systems and process changes, e.g. the Identity Management and Programme Level Approach initiatives.

Communications and awareness raising is being undertaken, tailored to specific audiences, with a greater focus on those staff who would be directly affected.

The project is currently operating within the allocated budget with a further c£15m to spend.

There are ongoing technical challenges with the hosted/managed system. These issues had not been flagged in the latest PwC review but the University is engaging with the system supplier to find a solution whilst exploring its options under the contract.

- 2.2 PwC Stage Gate Review: The fourth assurance review has taken place and reported to the Oversight Group as well as the Programme Board. This review focused on a number of areas, notably business readiness; testing; (inter)dependencies and cross over; and oversight and governance arrangements.

The Group has welcomed the approach taken by project leaders, whereby higher risk areas were discussed openly and proactively with colleagues in the context of encouraging action. PwC have also noted the positive level of transparency and acceptance of assurance around the project.

Particular attention was drawn to:

- Ensuring the migration of student data to the new system as a priority;
- Finalising an appropriate approach to testing to ensure that the solution is technically ready;
- The relatively small size of the testing team (3-4 people) and options for increasing capacity and resilience, e.g. external support;
- Communicating the impact of changes to specific individuals
- The potential need for stronger governance arrangements to ensure users feel they can input but that system can operate as planned;
- Plans to clarify and disseminate how different elements will be progressed, i.e. through the project or other business processes/operations;
- Ensuring that lessons learned from the prior release of the two pieces of functionality were incorporated into future transitions plans.

- 2.3 Risk Update: An update on risk now features as a standing item on the Group's agendas. Four key areas of risk have been identified:

Creating and ensuring the necessary sense of ownership at the appropriate level of the business, including responsibility for maintenance. Mitigation: The work to support transition into business as usual is designed to mitigate this risk (see below).

Limited testing capacity with the potential of an increasing backlog of work which needs testing. Mitigation: 7 additional testing roles are being recruited, alongside the introduction of additional consultancy support for specialist testing elements.

The planned transitional arrangements: it might be useful for Council to receive an update about how major changes were being managed more generally, through the Strategic Change Office. Mitigation: A transition plan is being developed with clear allocation of roles and responsibilities during and following transition into business as usual. This plan will be developed in close partnership with faculties and CICS and be in place before the new academic year.

The challenge in recruiting and retaining staff with the requisite skills into the projects team given alternative employment opportunities available in the city. Mitigation: Key fixed-term staff are being transitioned onto permanent contracts. This process is being completed in partnership with HR and CICS using a risk based approach. Contractors are being used where required (noting budget impact).

3. Next steps

The Group will meet again after the next stage gate review, which is likely to take place during late 2019.



Progress Update and Timelines

1 Status

- 1.1. A detailed implementation plan, up to September 2019, is currently being delivered by the Student Lifecycle Project (SLP). A plan that extends to October 2020 – the expected closure of the project – is being finalised. The project timeline is in the Appendix.
- 1.2. The first release was delivered in October 2018 when the AskUS service was successfully launched to prospective students. A second release was delivered in April 2019 when the Interim Module Management system went live.
- 1.3. Five business workstreams are continuing to develop new functionality relating to Assessment, Curriculum, Student Records Management, Student Visa and Student Finance. The implementation plan associated with these workstreams was reprioritised in autumn 2018 to focus on the 'Must' requirements.
- 1.4. The programme is running within budget forecasts and incorporates staff contracts through to the planned end, October 2020. Total budget expenditure to April 2019, is £6,192,268 which represents 32.13% of the overall Programme budget. Currently there is £469,757 unallocated budget, but it is intended that this will support an increase in Testing resource at the request of the Sponsoring Group.

2 Key themes over the last six months

- 2.1 In March, the SLP Sponsoring Group decided to reschedule the major launch of student-facing services to autumn 2020 (from autumn 2019). This decision was made in response to three factors:
 - 1) An increase in concerns about the University's readiness for the scale of change planned for autumn 2019
 - 2) The postponement of Data Futures. Data Futures is a project to change statutory reporting for all universities and SLP was building functionality that would support the new way of working
 - 3) The project experienced a series of different challenges with the technical work required. This led to three projects tracking toward RED rag status over the early months of the year.
- 2.2 SLP timelines and workload have been reviewed in response to the decision by the Sponsoring Group, who were keen to ensure that the reschedule did not affect the pace of the work currently being undertaken and that the programme considered whether any aspects of the development go live during the 2019/20 academic year. This work has informed the timeline presented in the Appendix.
- 2.3 Current workstream projects are being closely monitored within the programme and through their respective Project Boards. This is critical to ensure that deadlines for development are met and resources can be reallocated within the programme to deliver other projects in late 2019 and 2020.

- 2.4 The Project team are working through a number of actions in response to our regular Pulse Survey – which is sent out to the whole University. The last survey flagged concerns about communications and the provision of information. A range of actions are being taken to address the feedback which includes the publication of more detailed timelines, what will happen when and the impact that it will have. These timelines also factor in the reschedule planning and will be published in early May.
- 2.5 A number of issues continue to be encountered with the new student system provider - Tribal. Whilst they are being flexible in working with us on changes to timescales and plans, we have experiencing ongoing technical challenges with their hosted/managed solution. The situation is being monitored closely.

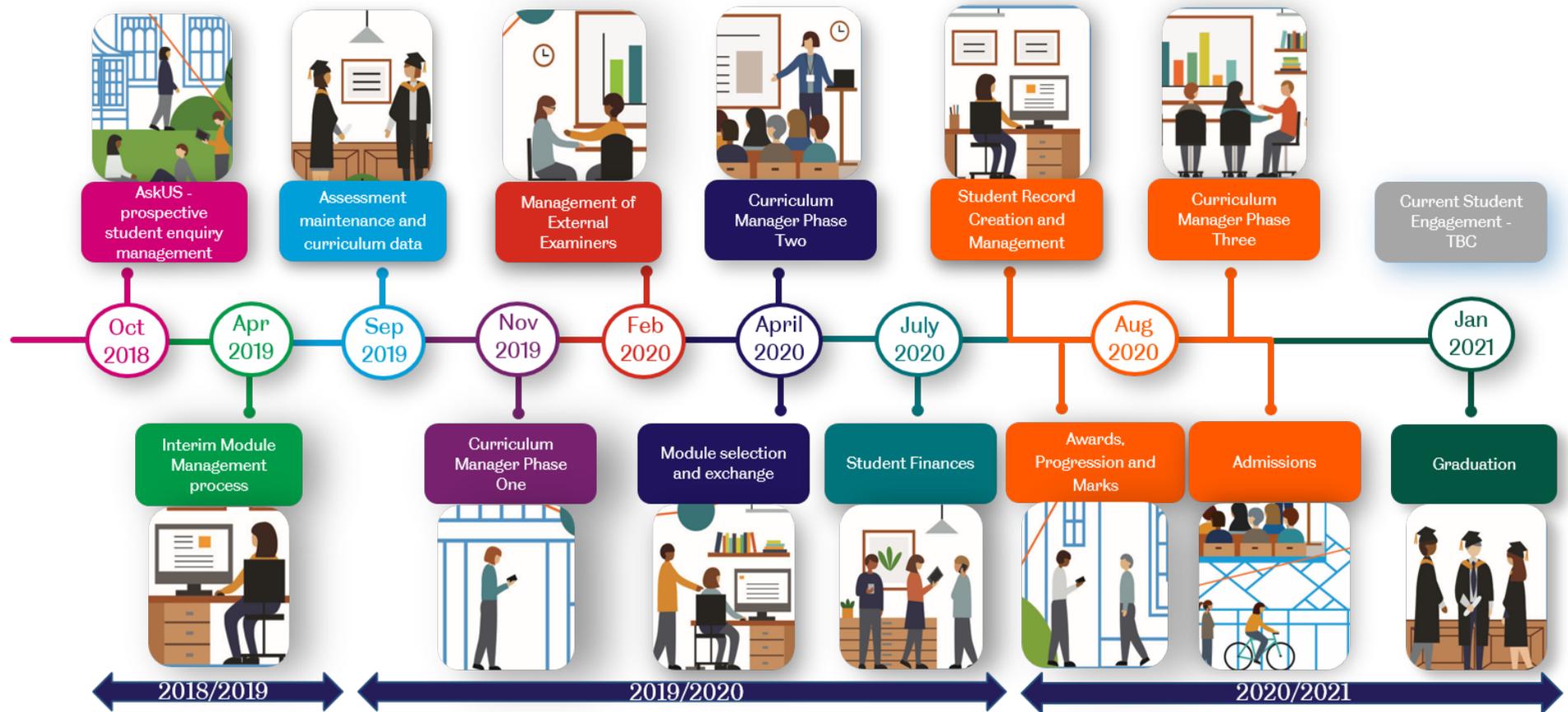
3 Key themes for the next six months

- 3.1 The completion of the current workstream projects is the priority for SLP. All of the current projects are due to complete in summer through to autumn. The overall implementation timeline is dependent on these projects finishing on schedule for resource to move onto other projects.
- 3.2 The People and Change team within SLP are leading work to improve our communications and information provision. This will mean much more detail is available for those that will be affected by the changes introduced through SLP. The team is also working closely with the workstreams to ensure that more subject matter experts from across the University are involved in the work. As we get closer to elements going live, it is expected that there will be concerns over workloads – managing the day to day alongside preparing for the future – which will need to be addressed.
- 3.3 We will be completing more software testing work than has been delivered before within the University and the scale of this work will be challenging. Ensuring that our approach to testing remains flexible and that we are able to bring in additional resource when required will be key in testing all of the developments sufficiently.
- 3.4 Further work is required to prepare for the transition of the new system into business as usual. In particular, there are substantial pieces of work to complete on:
- 1) Building the new student systems team in CICS that will act as the hub for the technical management of the new system
 - 2) Ensuring there is sufficient skilled resource in place in the professional service departments that will take on product owner and super user responsibilities for different elements of the new system

Al Carlile/Scott Porter

April 2019

Appendix – Release Timeline



Tuition Fee setting, Examination paper production, Examination attendance and student evaluation of the Curriculum will be taken forward by colleagues from the University after the end of SLP.

Project Release Content

Release 1 (16-Oct-18)	Enquiry Management for Prospective Students (AskUS)
Release 2 (15-Apr-19)	Interim Module Management
Release 2.1 (Jun-19)	Interim Diet Management (Client) (IDM)
Release 3 (Aug-19)	Assessment Management Portal, Historical Data setup - Programmes and Modules, Interim Programme Manager (IPM), Interim Accreditation Data set-up (IAD)
Release 4 (Oct-19)	Curriculum Manager (CM) Part 1 - Diet Management, KIS Unistats (CUR Data provision - report to be built by reporting team), Partnership data definition and migration.
Release 5 (Feb-20)	Management of External Examiners UG/PGT (EEX)
Release 6 (Apr-20)	Build Your Course, CM Part 2 - Module Directory
Release 7 (Jul-20)	Tuition Fees Matrix, Student Loans, Scholarships, Bursaries, Sponsors, Debt Management, Financial Support, SAP integration, Expenses
Release 8 (Aug-20)	Admissions, Enrolment, Financial Registration, Change of Status, Build Your Profile, Visa, Statutory Returns, Student Attendance Monitoring, Academic Progression, Mark Processing, Assessment Information Portal, Mark Schemes, Extenuating Circumstances, Exam Board Reporting, Curriculum Manager Part 3 (Programme Management, Module Management, Accreditation Management and Review, Partnership Management)
Release (Jan-21)	Graduation, Data Futures

Potential Projects for BAU (not currently planned)	Tuition Fee Setting, Examination Paper Production, Examination Attendance, Student Evaluation of the Curriculum.
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Training and first look events timeline

