Academic Restructure - Student FAQs

FAQs 3 May 2019

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1. Why are we re-organising the academic department's administration?

The decision to dissolve our existing three faculties and create six Academic Schools and a Doctoral School means that we need to reconfigure our Academic Administration to meet the needs of the new school/department structures. At the same time, it has also presented an opportunity to transform the way in which Academic Administration is delivered across the College to enhance the student experience and deliver a better service to academics.

A new administrative approach will enable the College to improve services used by students and staff, including using new technologies to make the services more efficient and accessible. The structures will mean that we can offer longer opening hours at the help desks and avoid closing at lunchtimes. It also creates bigger and more sustainable administrative teams, which mean that staff will be better supported and more likely to be able to develop their careers at the College.

2. What did the consultation involve?

The formal consultation on the transformation of academic administration ran from 17 January to 20 March. It began with a series of meetings to brief all staff who could be affected by the proposed changes. Everyone had at least one individual meeting and there were various drop-in sessions during the consultation period. After the period ended, senior management approved a final structure, incorporating various adjustments to reflect feedback received during the consultation.

3. What will happen now to the existing administrative staff in departments?

After the consultation period ended, all staff were notified of their final options. Staff who had been matched directly to a role in the new structure were invited to express their preferences for School. Other staff were asked for their preferences for role as well as School and invited to attend an interview. The interviews took place between 8 April and 3 May. The appointment of School Managers and their deputies was announced on 30 April. Final appointments for all other posts should be confirmed by Monday 13 May.

4. How will you make sure local knowledge is not lost when department teams are dissolved?

We appreciate how important local knowledge is to the successful administration of departments

and want to ensure that as much of this is retained in the new School teams as possible. Department expertise will therefore be a key factor in allocating individuals to schools. Heads of School and School Managers will need to take full advantage of this expertise as the new school teams find their feet.

5. How will the Helpdesk in the new Schools operate?

It is too early to provide precise information about how individual School Helpdesks will operate: each School team will work out its own detailed arrangements. However, all Helpdesks will apply the same principles:

- they will open daily between 8.30am and 5.30pm;
- there will always be at least one person at the Helpdesk but more people will staff the desk when the need arises;
- the Helpdesk will help, not hinder the provision of support to students. Where appropriate it will provide prompt and efficient support to students, but it will not prevent students from talking to other members of the administration team when the need arises;
- There will be a confidential space in every School Office in case a student wishes to have a private conversation with a member of staff.

6. What will the creation of the Doctoral School mean for PGR students?

The Doctoral School will bring together the administrative activities which support PGR students in their studies, with a key aim of improving and simplifying the support available to PGR students throughout their studies. This means that in future, PGR students will need to contact the Doctoral School for most of the services that are currently dealt with by the departmental PGR administrators. Work is under way on the details of how the Doctoral School will operate, including the production of a clear guide of which services will sit within the Doctoral School and which still sit within the academic Schools.

7. Will there be specific staff assigned to departments in the Schools?

The new structures have been designed to ensure that all School and Department activities will still be supported, including those that are Department or discipline specific, however, all staff will support all Departments in the School rather than just one. This means that if you have a question there will be more staff available to help you, giving you a quicker response.

8. Where will the School offices be located?

Discover where your School Office will be located from September 2019 in this video.
The School offices will include an accessible Helpdesk through which students will be able to ask questions and access all School services. The Helpdesk area will include a waiting area and a 1-2-1 meeting room for students with more complex queries.

9. What impact will the proposal have on the admin process and efficiency of departments given that the School Manager will, potentially, be in another building?

To ensure that each service is delivered as effectively as possible and by the right people in College, we are reviewing each of the core services, mapping how they will be delivered within new structures and noting where changes to processes and systems are also needed to deliver the service more effectively.

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10. What's the timetable?

24 October 2018	Academic Board voted to support the move to Academic Schools
22 November 2018	Council approved new academic structure
November – December 2018	Heads of School appointed
January – March 2019	Working groups to review operational and governance issues and determine how the new academic structure will work
20 March 2019	End of Academic Administration Transformation consultation period
End March 2019	Announcement on the Academic Administration Transformation
April – June 2019	Appointment of School & Department Academic Roles Appointment of School Administrative Roles
August 2019	New structure to come into place

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