



IT Services Annual Review

2017

# Introduction

Welcome to this, the latest, annual review from IT Services that I hope you will find informative and interesting. The review is designed to give you an insight into the initiatives that IT Services has been pursuing to enhance the student experience, support all of the University staff and provide facilities for visitors.

In determining which initiatives are the most beneficial to our Users, we consider 5 criteria viz

- Will it enhance the User experience?
- Will it enable processes to be done in a timelier, cost effective manner?
- Does it enhance the security of the service and the University/ your data?
- Does it contribute to the University's Green Impact policy?
- Is the proposal innovative?

As you will read in the following pages, a huge amount has been done in the last 12 months to contribute to these criteria. You will also see that we have plans to progress these aims during 2018. As in previous years, the University continues to invest significantly in its IT capabilities allowing us to provide a first class service to all our users.

One of the big challenges that we continue to face is the issue of Cyber Security and malicious attempts to disrupt services and / or steal valuable data. This is an ever-growing concern and requires actions by both IT Services and the continuing vigilance of all of our users. I am grateful to you all for your help in reducing the risks of such attacks by your adherence to good practice in relation to account / password management and care in opening / responding to questionable e-mails.

Once again, I was delighted to see that we had the [second highest score](#) in the overall table of established Universities in the 2017 National Student Service. We also maintained our position as the [best](#) in the North West, ahead of University of Liverpool, University of Manchester, Liverpool John Moores, Edge Hill and Chester.

I would like to take this opportunity to, once again, thank all of my colleagues within IT Services, colleagues from other areas and students who have provided us with invaluable support and guidance.

Finally, I remain keen to hear the views of staff and students about the service provided by the Department. Once you have read this review, do please share your feedback and experiences with us. By all means, contact me directly with any comments you might have.

**Mike Beecroft**

Director of IT Services

# Student Recruitment

## **Applicant Selection System**

A new system that provides the Enrolment Team with the ability to read and add information to applications online resulting in offers being made more swiftly.

## **Automatic acknowledgment of Applications**

New UCAS applicants are automatically e-mailed on receipt of their application.

## **On-Line Interview system for QTS, PGCE Primary and PGCE Secondary**

A new system that gathers applicant information into a single place and allows interview outcomes to be recorded on-line.

## **Postgraduate Research Student Recruitment**

The process for recording the creation and outcome of interviews has been automated. In addition, improved staff views and a workflow for the submission / review of Expressions of Interest have been introduced.

## **Security Card Photographs**

A new facility was introduced that allows new Level-C students to send in their own photograph prior to arrival thus allowing cards to be pre-printed.

# Teaching Support

## **Student Registration and Fees**

The facility that enables students to register for their course and set up appropriate fee payment arrangements has been updated to incorporate a responsive design that makes it easier to use on mobile and tablet devices.

## **Online transfer of students between tutorial groups**

A new facility that allows the transfer of students between tutorial groups with the timetable being automatically updated.

## **Communicating with Schools**

An On-Line recording system has been introduced that allows all contact with schools providing teaching placements for our students to be documented.

## **Graduation Attendance**

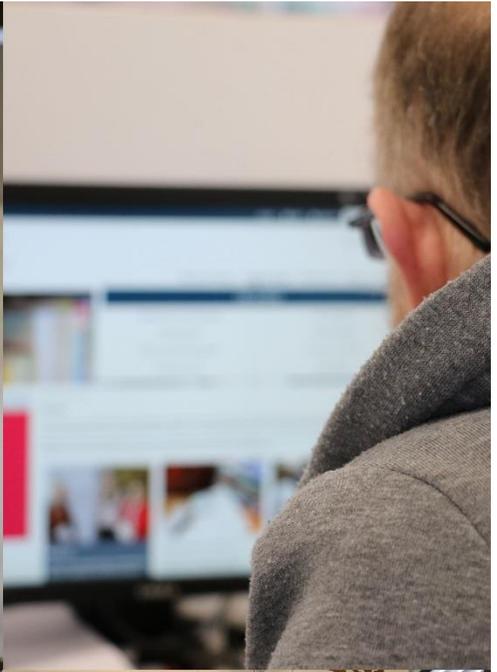
The facility which allows students to confirm their attendance at a Graduation Ceremony has been updated to incorporate a responsive design that makes it easier to use on mobile and tablet devices.

## **Higher Education Achievement Record**

An enhancement to the HEAR system which records membership of societies, sporting groups and University bodies was launched.

## **Professional Mentoring**

A new system has been introduced to provide mentors at schools with training material and an assessed program of study.



# Support for Research Activities

## **Hope Impact**

Working with colleagues in Mathematics and Computer Science, this new facility for capturing the impact of research along with its related publications, activities and evidence was introduced.

## **Implementation of the Unity system**

A new, collaborative tool for research that allows staff and students to work together, share files and form teams online.

## **Bristol Online Survey**

A powerful, easy to use tool for creating online surveys and enabling collaborative working and benchmarking across multiple institutions.

## **Hope Institutional Research Archive (HIRA)**

A number of improvements have been made to the system to improve its search facilities and ease of use.

## **Research Ethics Approval**

The previous paper based system for Undergraduate students to obtain ethical approval for research proposals has been replaced with a fully On-Line system.

## **Post Graduate Research Annual Monitoring**

The process to conduct the Annual Monitoring assessment for Post Graduate Research students has now been automated with full audit trails being provided.

# Investment in IT Hardware

## **HCA West Wing**

Improved wireless signal quality and higher speeds have been provided on the first and second floors:

- New wireless network hardware installed in the office spaces
- Dedicated network hardware installed in every student bedroom in St Agnes and St Margaret halls utilising the latest Wi-Fi frequencies

In addition, new wired network hardware has been installed in the office spaces delivering a tenfold increase in speed

## **HCA East Wing**

- Additional capacity has been added to the wireless network in St Elphin and St Etheldreda halls

## **Cyber Security**

An extensive program of upgrades has been undertaken on the network infrastructure devices to deliver increased security and reliability including:

- Measures to protect against recent cyber threats such as WannaCry, Meltdown, Spectre
- 'Penetration testing' and investigation to mitigate future threats
- New Firewalls and other related security facilities.

# Investment in IT Hardware (cont)

## Hope Park

- 60 PCs have been updated on the Sheppard-Worlock Library Balcony
- Upgraded microphones, receivers and distribution units in the Chapel
- New AV teaching facilities in FML311 including touch screen technology with large repeater screens and 20 new high performance PCs.
- Improved projection facilities in LHBS017 and FML413.
- Creation of a new IT lab in the Business school including 30 PCs / laptops.
- Working with Estates, a number of major room moves were completed:
  - Transfer of the Learning Lab from Eden to the Gateway Building
  - Move of External Relations and Enrolment to Eden203
  - IT Labs transferred from 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Eden to Eden001 & Eden002
  - Law and Early Childhood Departments into the HCA West Wing

## Creative Campus

- Improved projection facilities in CAP028, COR110 and COR106.
- Enhanced wireless capability in the CAP028 iMac lab

## Aigburth Park

The campus has been connected to the network infrastructure provided by JISC. This has resulted in a 10 fold increase in available bandwidth for the main Internet connection to Aigburth Park.

# Software Enhancements

## University Website

The website has been transferred to upgraded hardware and software to provide faster editing and updating.

Working with colleagues in External Relations, new page templates have been created. The first of these was utilised in the redesign of the University Home Page resulting in improved usability on mobile devices.

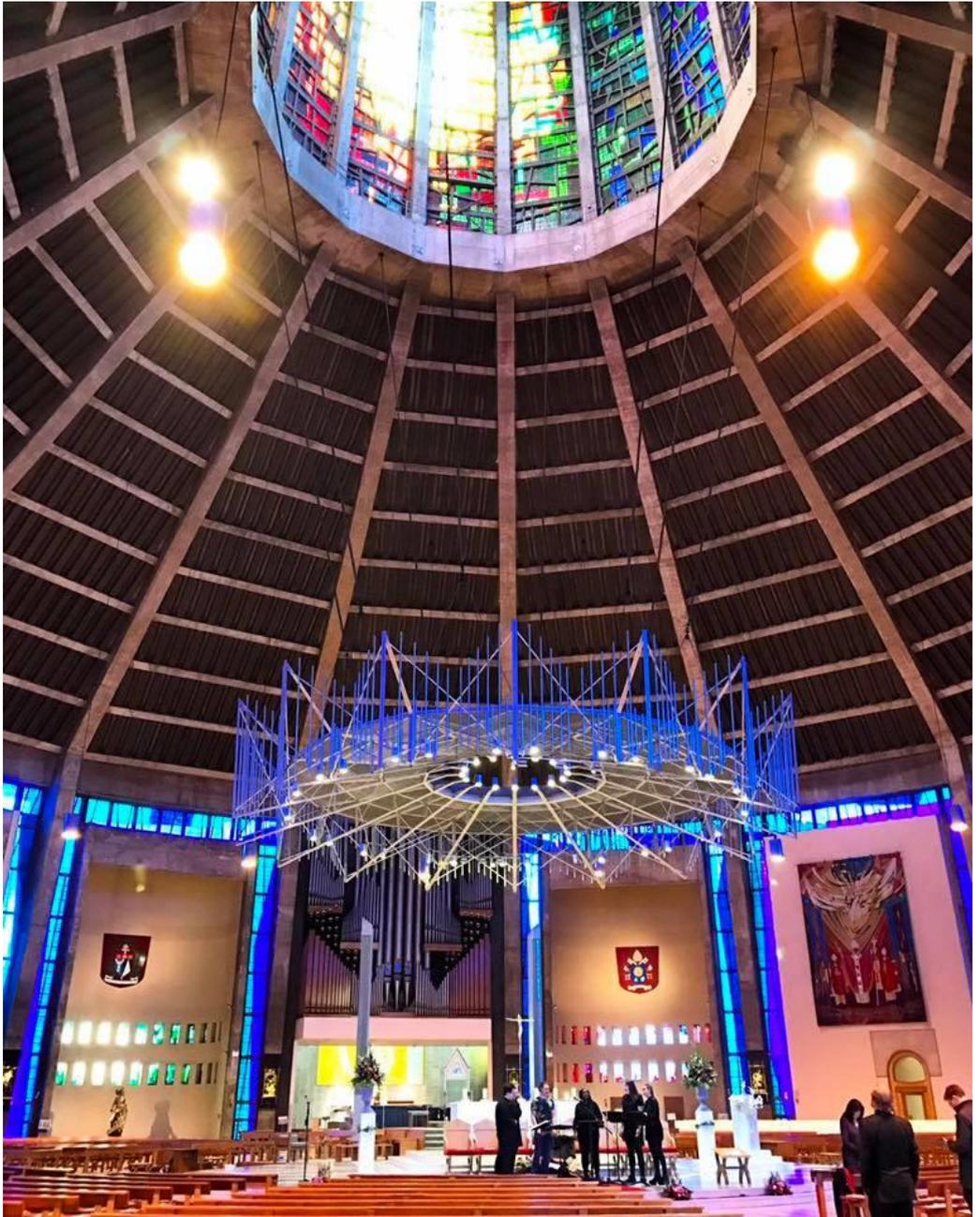
## Hope Works Recruitment System Enhancements

A number of enhancements have been made to this system including:

- new functionality to verify that a student has the right to work
- Simplified processes and reduction in administrative overheads
- Introduction of a shortlisting facility for applicants.

## Third Party Packages

- The latest Adobe Creative Cloud Suite has been installed on all open access and lab PCs across the University providing easier access to a wider range of Adobe applications.
- IBM SPSS software has been upgraded to version 24.
- Microdiet software has been updated to version 4.4.1.
- MatLab has been updated to version R2017b and installed on an increased number of PCs.
- PCs in FML413 have been upgraded to provide improved software capability and faster logon times for Windows 10.
- Technical software utilised by Mathematics & Computing, Psychology and Health Sciences has been added to a wider range of PCs.
- Upgrade to the latest compatible Operating Systems, Logic Pro X, Sibelius 7.5, AVID Pro Tools, MAX MSP and GRM Tools that provides greater software uniformity across iMacs at the Creative Campus.



# University Events

In addition to Graduation, the team provided AV, lighting and sound support for many high-profile events including:

## Conferences

- Northern Catholic Conference attended by over 250 guests
- EYPUK attended by over 200 guests
- Littoral Conference 2017
- All Saints Conference
- International Conference on Education, Culture & Disability Studies
- Annual Conference of the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War and Peace Studies
- Theorising the Popular Conference
- National School Chaplaincy Conference

## Guest Lectures and Gala Dinners

- Archbishop Blanch Lectures delivered by Rt Revd Rachel Treweek and Professor Alister McGrath attended by 300 guests
- Inaugural lecture given by Professor Ian Vandewalle
- Annual Hopkins Lecture
- Professorial Lectures – Professor Solomon Salako and Professor John Harris
- The Distinguished Lecture Series Including Sir Christ Stone, Professor Jan Walmsley, Professor Kate Pickett and Dr Alex Scott-Samuel

## Capstone Theatre

- Liverpool International Jazz Festival 2017 including artists such as Dennis Rollins, Pascal Schumacher, Courtney Pine amongst others
- The Annual Cornerstone Festival
- Milapfest Indika Festival 2017 featuring high profile Indian Classical artists in dance and music attended by over 250 guests
- Milapfest International Dance Collaboration
- Philharmonic Youth Choir
- Liverpool Mozart Orchestra
- Liverpool One Church
- Ricky Ross – Short Stories Vol 1
- Ian Boddy and Nigel Mullaney

# Planned Developments

Many initiatives are being progressed for implementation during 2018 including:

## **School Placement Management**

Automated processing which allows partner schools to manage the number and types of placement available and to see details of students allocated to these places.

## **Library Management System**

Working with colleagues in the Library, a new, integrated system will be implemented.

## **On-Line processing of applications via UCAS**

A number of the existing paper based processes will be replaced with On-Line facilities including the ability for applicants to change interview dates themselves.

## **Student course change.**

The existing paper based process for students to apply to change course will be replaced with an On-Line facility.

## **Research Environment**

System to capture the vitality of the environment covering research strategy, infrastructure and environment, including research income and degrees awarded.

## **Research Ethics System**

The existing system will be enhanced to include ethical approval for Postgraduate Students and Staff.

## **Initiatives to reduce the administrative burden and paper usage e.g.**

- Electronic production of Security reports
- Electronic production of Resident Tutor reports

## **Technical Developments**

- An extended rollout of Windows 10 across campus
- Changes required to meet the new General Data Protection Regulations
- Continued refreshment of the IT network to enhance reliability, connectivity and security

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