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The last few years have seen a rapid rise in the stature of Queen Mary, University of London to become one of the leading research-led institutions in the UK. Queen Mary is widely perceived to be on a continuing upward trajectory. Higher education as a whole however, is facing uncertain times. In particular, the recently proposed changes to the way teaching is funded – moving away from Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) grants, to a reliance on increased student tuition fees – will change the landscape in which we operate.

These changes in university funding may lead to students becoming more critical of perceived shortcomings in educational provision – especially as they are likely to accrue a sizeable amount of personal debt through pursuing a university education. Furthermore, the funding for research and capital expenditure is also under great pressure.

While we can, as an institution, face these challenges with some confidence, there is no room for complacency. The need to provide services of the highest quality has never been greater. Over recent years, Queen Mary’s IT provision has fallen behind the level needed to optimise the support of students and staff as they pursue educational and research objectives. We believe now is the right time to invest in an ambitious IT strategy that will transform and modernise our IT capabilities within three years.

This document sets out Queen Mary, University of London’s Information Technology (IT) strategy for the period 2010-15. The IT strategy is business-led and is fully aligned with the College’s Strategic Plan 2010-15.

The strategy has been drawn up by the Director of IT services and the IT services team, supported by PA Consulting, with input from all academic schools and departments, including representation from Queen Mary Students’ Union (QMSU). The Queen Mary Senior Executive (QMSE) has also been actively involved, and is fully behind its implementation. College-wide collaboration and partnership is essential to our future success.

Simon Gaskell, Principal
The context for Queen Mary's IT strategy has been informed by the College’s Strategic Plan 2010-15, together with internal business requirements and external factors that influence our technology and service delivery choices.

**The external environment impacting Queen Mary is changing dramatically.** The recent announcements of a significant reduction in government funding for higher education, coupled with changes to the allocation of research funds and substantially higher student fees is increasing the already competitive market for students, research grants and alternative sources of local and international funding.

**Students are more confident consumers of IT than ever before.** They are consumers prepared to take their fees to the university with the potential for the best overall educational experience. They come to university already familiar and comfortable with modern IT facilities such as social networking, virtual learning and mobile working. It is essential that the College’s IT provision adds to the appeal of studying at Queen Mary.

**Improved research IT capabilities are needed.** Increasing competition for research funding will require not only academic excellence but a more commercial approach to winning bids. Investment in our IT capabilities will help to achieve greater certainty in our research funding pipeline, allowing academic researchers to focus on the quality of their work rather than having to define and manage IT solutions.

**We need to reduce time wasted on administration.** This will allow Queen Mary staff more time to focus on the best research and academic outcomes for our students.

**These pressures are common to all UK universities.** With central Government funding reducing, competition intensifying, and sources of research funding becoming ever more challenging, our IT capability must improve and modernise.
IT Services strategic principles

IT Services will apply industry best practice and common sense principles to create a unified, business-led IT culture at Queen Mary, University of London. Our goal is to offer centralised technology solutions with local control where this is appropriate.

The following principles will inform our decision-making about technology investment:

• **Customer experience driven:** We steer the direction of information technology solutions to deliver excellent customer services that meet and adapt to user demands as these evolve. We partner with schools/institutes/departments, peer institutions, and technology suppliers to develop and share best practice.

• **Investor in people:** We value our staff and will invest in their career development for the benefit of our staff and Queen Mary. We actively seek accreditation for this with Investors in People, a business improvement tool administered by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, and supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

• **Secure and resilient:** We design solutions and select technologies that incorporate information management, security and data protection needs.

• **Industry best practice solutions:** We strive to use technology that follows proven and published standards, whether open source or commercial. When appropriate, we select technologies that reduce the complexity of information and systems integration. We deploy systems and services that can be scaled without altering the basic design or architecture of the system.

• **Integrated:** We avoid divergent implementations of technologies that may require additional cost, training, or could confuse our users. We encourage vendors to make their products integrate with our infrastructure and require interoperable solutions.

• **Automated:** We strive to automate routine and manual tasks related to every aspect of IT service. We will implement automation that enhances efficiency, improves customer service and allows us to successfully scale up support across Queen Mary. The tools we use for IT support improve the experience of our users.

• **Sustainable:** We actively contribute to the Queen Mary 2020 carbon reduction plan by designing, selecting, and maintaining our IT to minimise resources (energy, materials or space) consumed in their operation. We consider the entire lifecycle of technology from acquisition to decommissioning.

• **Targeted innovation:** We develop innovative approaches when needed to address Queen Mary’s unique requirements. We make targeted investments in areas of technology innovation that we expect will provide significant benefit to the university.
Other influences on our technology choices

Users expect IT to be available everywhere – students and staff expect IT to be truly mobile and available anywhere, 24x7, on a device of their choice.

- Threats are increasing for information security – impacting risk mitigation and legal compliance
- Data and digital content are becoming richer – increasing storage and analysis demands on IT infrastructure
- Adoption of IT best practices is proven and the norm – other leading organisations including UK universities have reduced costs and improved IT services by adopting industry standard business processes
- IT services are becoming more commonly delivered as shared services – through internal and external partnerships as well as the Internet. This offers the potential for improvements in quality and a reduction in cost through economies of scale, along with an improvement in the ability to respond more rapidly to changes in IT service demands.
Following consultation across all academic schools, professional services and the Students’ Union, the Queen Mary Senior Executive (QMSE) agreed four strategic IT themes designed to improve the way we work, now and in the future.

These themes are aligned to the Queen Mary strategic aims which will drive excellence in knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination.

A comprehensive range of requirements have been captured and mapped to the IT Strategic themes and furthermore, the Queen Mary aims.

Each theme underpins and creates a modern IT infrastructure and offers enabling IT services.

### Four strategic IT themes

The following table bullet the key outcomes for each theme. Each IT strategic theme is broken down into more detail further on.

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#### Enhanced and personalised student experience

- Modern IT infrastructure familiar to students and employers
- Personalised student experience across the College - providing integrated content
- Improved access to Queen Mary information – anytime / anywhere
- Increased support and availability of IT support
- High satisfaction for all IT support needs
- Improved use of personal devices and access to Queen Mary

#### Improved research lifecycle management

- Reduction of time and effort to complete grant bids
- Greater certainty of research IT costs
- Increased success rate of grant bids
- Improvement of managing IT research solutions
- Improved research analytical reporting

#### Improved business systems and reporting, to support administration services

- Improved business intelligence - more simplified and consistent reporting
- Improvement of management information (MI) reporting and workflows
- Reduced burden for MI reporting
- Improved quality of MI reporting
- Standardisation of data and reporting and data manipulation tools
- Improvement of management information (MI) reporting and workflows
- Reduced number of logins required to access Queen Mary IT systems
- Improved information storage, server hosting, security and disaster recovery capability
- Improved remote access
- Enhanced desktop services
- High performance networks and telephony
- Contribution to 2020 Carbon Reduction
Enhanced personalised student experience

“Technology has been transforming our daily lives over the last decade, completely changing the ways in which we communicate and search for information. For students and staff at Queen Mary, the opportunities for IT to personalise the programmes for individual students’ needs are huge, increasingly allowing them to learn when they want, where they want and at the pace that suits them.”

Professor Susan Dilly, Vice Principal, Teaching and Learning
Enhanced personalised student experience

We will put the user experience at the heart of everything we do in IT services, delivering improvements in our IT capabilities and services to enhance and personalise the student experience and improve user satisfaction. We will achieve this by providing the following:

- A personalised, integrated and seamless learning environment, where all relevant information is available in one place, allowing students to work in the way that suits them best
- Access to modern industry standard applications that many students are already familiar with and that employers demand
- Improved quality and availability of IT support, including automation and self help for simple routine requests such as password resets, and a fast high-quality response to any IT issues that prevent students from studying or revising
- Opportunity to continue to engage with Queen Mary after graduation.

Enhancing and personalising the student IT experience is key to improving the students’ learning outcomes and satisfaction. These outcomes are dependent upon the quality and availability of the IT services Queen Mary provides.

Enhanced and personalised student experience

Outcomes and improvements

- Modern IT infrastructure familiar to students and employers
- Personalised student experience across the College - providing integrated content
- Improved access to Queen Mary information – anytime / anywhere
- Increased support and availability of IT support
- High satisfaction for all IT support needs
- Improved use of personal devices and access to Queen Mary
2015 vision for an enhanced and personalised student experience

More personalised learning experience

The new and improved Queen Mary virtual learning environment (VLE) will provide seamless access to high quality digital content to support lectures and revision, with additional support for students with special needs and those whose first language is not English. Selected content from lectures can be accessed as podcasts – either through the VLE or online.

Our improved IT tools for e-learning will support improvements in academic learning outcomes. Module feedback using Amazon-style ratings will help us to continually assess and improve module content.

Students will have access to a personalised view of their objectives and learning content, not a just a static structure of courses and modules. Personalised reading lists will contain links through to the library and external resources. Objective setting, learning progress and feedback will be integrated with coursework submission and marking. Discussion forums will be used more widely to share feedback and facilitate learning.

Access to modern industry standard applications

Modern industry standard email and calendaring will be provided across the whole of Queen Mary. Lecture and laboratory timetables will be integrated with students’ individual calendars, and accessible from personal computers and phones. Students and academics can opt to be provided with up-to-date notification of changes in their academic timetable. The majority of Queen Mary library resources will be available electronically and the management of access licenses and copyright will be seamlessly integrated.

Improved quality and availability of IT support

IT service support will be available at times when students and staff need it most. There will be easy access to self help for more routine requirements such as password resets, and a one stop IT customer service facility, integrated with the Queen Mary library and VLE support. The facility will provide extended opening hours, matching the opening times of the library.

IT services will work in collaboration with Queen Mary schools/institutes/faculties and administrative departments to ensure that appropriate self help and web-based support options are available for key Queen Mary applications with a view to improving the level of support for students and in particular international and remote students.

Improvements in College-wide infrastructure

High-speed secure wireless networking will be available across the Queen Mary campus. Simplified access and improved tools will enable students, staff and visitors to connect their personal devices to the Eduroam network, VLE and key applications. Better remote access services will improve off-site capabilities for anytime / anywhere working.

Continuing personalised engagement beyond graduation

Alumni will be able to be kept informed about developments at Queen Mary and to sign up for an alumni email address.
“Creating and disseminating the highest quality research relies on the highest quality IT infrastructure. This substantial investment will provide a secure online environment that will help translate bright ideas into successful grant applications and excellent publications. It will also support academics who need dedicated technical advice for research projects and allow us to track the ways in which our cutting-edge research feeds into commercial activities and public engagement.”

Professor Evelyn Welch, Vice-Principal Research and International Affairs
Enhanced IT capabilities will improve the full research lifecycle (from concept to publication) and reduce the administrative effort of researchers at Queen Mary. As a result of these improvements Queen Mary will be in a much better position to manage grant applications and achieve an improved research funding success rate.

We will achieve this by proving the following:

- IT consultancy and tools that will support research funding bids and offer greater confidence in the IT component leading to a greater likelihood of success.

- IT project management, technical support and rapid deployment of IT environments for research projects, improving the quality, security and speed of research data gathering, whilst minimising the need for researchers to act as IT support technicians.

- Improved IT tools to reduce administrative burden and improve the quality of research analytics, reporting and citation management.

- IT capabilities to improve research impact and bibliometrics.

Global competition for research funding continues to increase which means it is essential for Queen Mary to implement these IT improvements. This will allow our researchers to focus on the most important aspects of academic research and knowledge dissemination.
2015 vision for improved research lifecycle management

**IT consultancy and tools for research grant applications**

Queen Mary professional services will provide IT consultancy support to assist with the IT specific elements of research grant applications, supporting an increase in the quality and success rate of research grant applications.

Tactical IT improvements will provide an interim solution to more effectively manage the preparation and approval process for research grant bids.

A new integrated research management system will reduce the administrative burden and improve the effectiveness of research management at Queen Mary. The system will support the entire research grant process – from identifying and assessing research grant opportunities – to tracking the achievements and commercial and public impact of our work.

**IT project management and technical support for research projects**

IT services will provide professional project management resources to support the successful planning and delivery of research project IT solutions, enabling academics to focus on research quality.

IT services will rapidly and cost-effectively make provision for robust research databases, collaboration platforms and centralised digital content stores on behalf of research projects. Researchers can be confident that their research information is secure, fully backed-up and recoverable.

A flexible knowledge management platform will enable researchers to work both more effectively and simultaneously on collaborative research. The platform will include version control and tools for collaborative working and will be able to support both internal and external research projects.

Researchers in the School of Medicine and Dentistry will have access to specific health related project toolkits that meet the sensitive information management needs of clinical trials and allow the secure exchange of information with NHS trusts, and compliance with regulatory organisations including the MHRA.

**IT tools to support research analytics and citation management**

Improved IT capabilities will be provided to extract and manage master data for all publications with which Queen Mary staff are involved. This will be integrated with internal and external citation sources and provide statistics for management reporting.

**IT capabilities to support research impact measurement and bibliometrics**

Researchers will have access to analytical software tools and data sources to measure the impact and influence of research publications and produce evidence to support the research excellence framework (REF) assessment. This includes combined citation management and bibliometrics to capture the research impact for the REF and other research frameworks, in particular for research grants from international sources such as the European Union.
“The opportunities for data sharing and information provision will bring huge benefits to Queen Mary as it modernises its IT systems in ways that will reduce bureaucracy and ensure that we remain competitive.”

Wendy Appleby, Secretary to Council and Academic Secretary
Improved business systems and reporting, to support administration services

Improvements in the College’s business intelligence capabilities will help us track and improve performance against the objectives and indicators of the Queen Mary, University of London Strategic Plan 2010-2015. It will also support and reduce the current administration burden associated with regulatory and research project reporting.

Improvements in IT capabilities for business intelligence and reporting will provide the following:

- Tactical reporting improvements to increase the accuracy and timeliness of current reporting capabilities
- A business intelligence (BI) competency centre offering analytical and reporting advice and services
- Standardisation of reporting and data manipulation tools across Queen Mary
- Reduced volume of discrete information repositories and a ‘single version of the truth’
- A clear master data and knowledge management strategy including information governance
- IT support for the second wave of e-HR implementation

Working in siloes has proved to create a headache when using data applications between departments across the College. These outcomes will enhance the use and support access to clearer, more accurate and widely support information which everyone at Queen Mary can benefit from.
2015 vision for improved business systems and reporting

Business intelligence capability will offer expertise and reporting services

The IT services Business Intelligence (BI) competency centre will provide BI advice, expertise and reporting services to academics and professional staff. This function will improve business intelligence, enabling Queen Mary to take more informed decisions, faster. It will also help to improve the quality and consistency of reports and reduce administrative effort.

The BI competency centre will create a data repository that enables data to be imported or accessed across multiple corporate systems including the full research lifecycle and financial management systems.

The BI competency centre will create a performance management dashboard based on the Queen Mary, University of London Strategic Plan 2010-2015 to demonstrate how business intelligence can be applied as an action oriented decision making tool.

Standardisation of reporting and data manipulation tools

IT services will define common standards and select a simplified set of tools to reduce the cost and management effort associated with data manipulation, data repositories and reporting including dashboard and analysis tools. These common standards will help to reduce the headache of inconsistent data between central services and academic schools and institutes.

Management information and master data governance

Information governance will align master data, information and knowledge management with the IT governance process.
Consolidated provision of common IT services and modern IT infrastructure

“With centralised IT services Queen Mary's IT will be easier to use, work better and be more consistent across the College, retaining a local feel where necessary.”

Mike Woodall, Assistant Director Customer Services, IT services
Consolidated provision of common IT services and modern IT infrastructure

Queen Mary will benefit greatly from an improved IT services operating model, one that provides a centralised service as well as continuing to support localised needs for specific schools. Consistency of IT services will impact on the College’s behaviour and enable smarter ways of working. The operating model will be underpinned and driven by modern IT infrastructure that Queen Mary, University of London can be confident and proud of.

Consolidating the provision of IT services will provide:
- A new target operating model for IT services based on industry best practice, improving overall IT service quality
- A framework to simplify, standardise and where practical, rationalise, infrastructure complexity, reducing overhead support and generating economies of scale savings
- Modern email and calendaring for students and staff
- Improved remote access to College systems anytime / anywhere using a standard web browser
- Simplified, secure identity and access management, reducing the number of logins required for access to Queen Mary systems
- Investment in professional competency development and line management development for IT staff
- Simplify the management and administration of College business systems.
- Improved desktop environments including the latest Windows 7 release
- Proactive infrastructure asset management to improve service reliability and contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions within Queen Mary.
- Centralised IT services where efficient and appropriate to the business operational needs
- Improved access to College information
- Improved IT support
- Modern tools supported by modern infrastructure
- Modern email, calendaring and collaboration tools for staff and students
- Reduced number of logins required to access Queen Mary IT systems
- Improved information storage, server hosting, security and disaster recovery capability
- Improved remote access
- Enhanced desktop services
- High performance networks and telephony
- Contribution to 2020 Carbon Reduction

The IT service support will be professional and highly effective - it will be equal to or exceed the quality and efficiency of the technology infrastructure available with our peer group.
2015 vision for consolidated provision of common IT service and modern IT infrastructure

Improvements in IT service delivery will be enabled through a new service delivery model and modern IT services

A new target model for IT, based on industry best practices including ITIL and CoBit will be implemented across Queen Mary with a dedicated relationship management team acting as the interface between academic schools and institutes and IT services. There will be a clear distinction between each user group’s requirements and IT service delivery.

Standard computer systems, applications and IT services can be ordered from a service catalogue and delivered quickly. You will have a transparent understanding of the cost of services and is included in that cost.

Business continuity arrangements for applications and infrastructure will be assured according to business criticality, priority and available funding. Standardised, efficient and pragmatic IT project management controls will ensure that projects are managed effectively with regular reporting to the IT governance forum.

End-to-end lifecycle management for applications and infrastructure, from innovation to decommissioning, will improve our use of software and hardware assets and contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

Electronic forms and approval mechanisms using Business Process Management (BPM) tools will be implemented to enable cross-university business process improvements further reducing the administrative burden for academics and Professional Services staff.

We will review our core business administration systems (such as Agresso, Northgate, SIS) and our learning platforms (Blackboard) to ensure that we make the best possible use of our existing investments to streamline College systems and administration.

IT services support will be professional and highly effective

A single integrated service desk will be established for IT, library and virtual learning environment. This will cover all support and service requests, (from new user requests and procurement of new devices to desktop and application services). Students and staff will be able to simply and quickly use self service tools to diagnose and resolve common issues (eg password reset) at any time of the day or night.

More complex issues will be dealt with by the service desk using multiple channels including the phone, email, instant messaging and remote support tools or through desk side visits, depending on the severity, priority and complexity of the issue.

Users will no longer need separate CDs to install and manage College software.

IT services will operate all services consistently across Queen Mary using repeatable, efficient processes aligned to industry best practice for IT management. Students and staff will be able to track the status of their service request or the resolution of an incident that may be affecting their services online.

A new business-led governance model for IT investment will be applied

QMSE will be actively involved in the ongoing governance of the IT strategy, implementation programmes and future IT investments, ensuring that our investment in IT contributes to the aims of the College’s Strategic Plan 2010-15.

IT architecture governance will be established to improve proactive planning and management and to simplify our IT infrastructure.
Modern email and calendaring for students and staff
Arranging meetings in Queen Mary will become a much simpler task with staff and students benefiting from modern, integrated email and calendaring. Multiple email systems in schools and faculties will no longer be required. The new email and calendaring system is available on College desktops, laptops and mobile devices, as well as personal computers and smart phones.

Simplified secure printing
We will use a more modern printer management solution to simplify and improve the security of printing. The solution will use Queen Mary identity cards for authentication and enable students and staff to use most printers on campus without having to know the name of the printer. The improved security will reduce the likelihood of print wastage and printouts inadvertently being picked up by other users, contributing to our 2020 carbon reduction objectives.

Simplified secure identity and access management
Infrastructure and application standardisation has made access to Queen Mary IT systems much easier. Through improved identity and access management there is a significant reduction in the number of user logins and passwords required to access Queen Mary systems.

Where required, strong identity management will be used to secure remote access to business critical systems. For sensitive applications such as medical systems containing patient data and human resources applications, IT services will provide additional security to ensure that sensitive data is protected and compliant with regulatory and corporate requirements.

We will investigate the use of Queen Mary identity cards for secure printing and potentially other "cashless" services on campus.

Improved server hosting and information storage
We will provide improved centralised hosting services for Queen Mary data and IT servers. These improvements will offer cost-effective, scalable and secure capacity that can be rapidly provisioned, for example for research and learning projects. The services will be fully backed up and supported and, where required, provide disaster recovery capabilities.

Enhanced Windows desktop services with a choice of standard services offerings
Central IT services will provide the computers and software with which staff are familiar and make it easy for them to do their job. A range of standard or tailored options will be available, through a service catalogue with a choice of computer and software products including Windows and optionally Mac or Linux systems.

Standard products will be fully managed by the central IT Services team. Extended support solutions will be provided, as costed options, to meet the needs of non-standard requirements.

We will upgrade the current Windows desktop environment to Microsoft Windows 7 creating a more modern look and feel and reducing our system administration and support costs.

Modern networks, telephony and remote access
Students and staff will have secure access to their Queen Mary applications wherever they are – home, on placement, at other universities or while travelling. Consultants, researchers and part-time lecturers will also have easy and secure access to the information they need to do their job.

We will implement an interface between Queen Mary and the NHS N3 network, in accordance with NHS IT security requirements, to support the needs of our medical school.

Our aging analogue telephone system will be replaced with a modern digital IP based solution integrated with remote working, improving reliability and reducing infrastructure complexity. The new solutions will also have the potential to improve call handling during peak times, for example during the annual clearing process.

We will improve our network infrastructure and capacity to improve resilience and performance. Improvements will also be provided for high quality WiFi access across Queen Mary.
High level roadmap and structure for change

The proposed improvements in IT services will enable us to “change the way Queen Mary works”.

Strong implementation and governance will be established. Led by the College’s strategic priorities and business needs, not just IT or technology considerations. The IT Strategy Implementation Board will govern both the IT Transformation programme and our future financial investment in IT services.

The leadership and governance is illustrated adjacent:

**IT Strategy Implementation Board**

*Membership:*
- **Professor Jeremy Kilburn**
  Vice Principal and Executive Dean (Science and Engineering)
- **Professor Morag Shiach**
  Vice Principal and Executive Dean (Humanities and Social Science)
- **Professor Evelyn Welch**
  Vice-Principal (Research and International Affairs)
- **Professor Sir Nicholas Wright**
  Warden of the School of Medicine and Dentistry

*Queen Mary Senior Executive*
- **John Yard**
  Independent Chair
- **Professor Philip Ogden**
  Senior Vice-Principal
- **Dean Curtis**
  Chief Administrative Officer
- **Chris Day**
  Director of IT Services
- **Martin McIntosh**
  Assistant Director, IT Projects
- **Professor Susan Dilly**
  Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning)

*Implementation of projects*

*User focus groups*

*Supporting groups:*

(eg focus groups) will be established as “task and finish” groups, with clear terms of reference.
A high level roadmap provides an illustration of potential implementation timescales

The following diagram illustrates the potential activities and timescales required to modernise and transform IT services in Queen Mary. The roadmap is indicative, the actual priorities, timing and initiatives will be developed as part of the mobilisation stage for the full IT transformation programme.

### Short term <6 months

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### Research lifecycle management

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### Business intelligence and reporting

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| | KM strategy and master data management | |
| E-HR phase 2 | |

### Enabling IT projects – “making things work”

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### Consolidated provision of common services and infrastructure

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High level roadmap and structure for change
The future for IT services

“We will put the user experience at the heart of everything we do in IT Services. Our strategic aim is to work in partnership to deliver an effective and valued IT experience.”

Chris Day, IT Director, IT services
The future for IT services

The provision of excellent IT facilities to staff and students is essential for the College to achieve its strategic goals. The Queen Mary Senior Executive has agreed to invest in a three year College-wide IT transformation programme which will deliver sector leading IT facilities for students and staff. The programme will provide the IT tools and services required to enable the College to achieve excellence in research and teaching and help to distinguish us in an increasingly competitive market.

We have commenced the planning and mobilisation stage for our modernisation and transformation programme for IT services across the College. Our transformation programme has already achieved some early success including our recent upgrade to wireless access across the College that has improved coverage, availability and performance. We are about to commence the implementation of wireless access in student accommodation.