

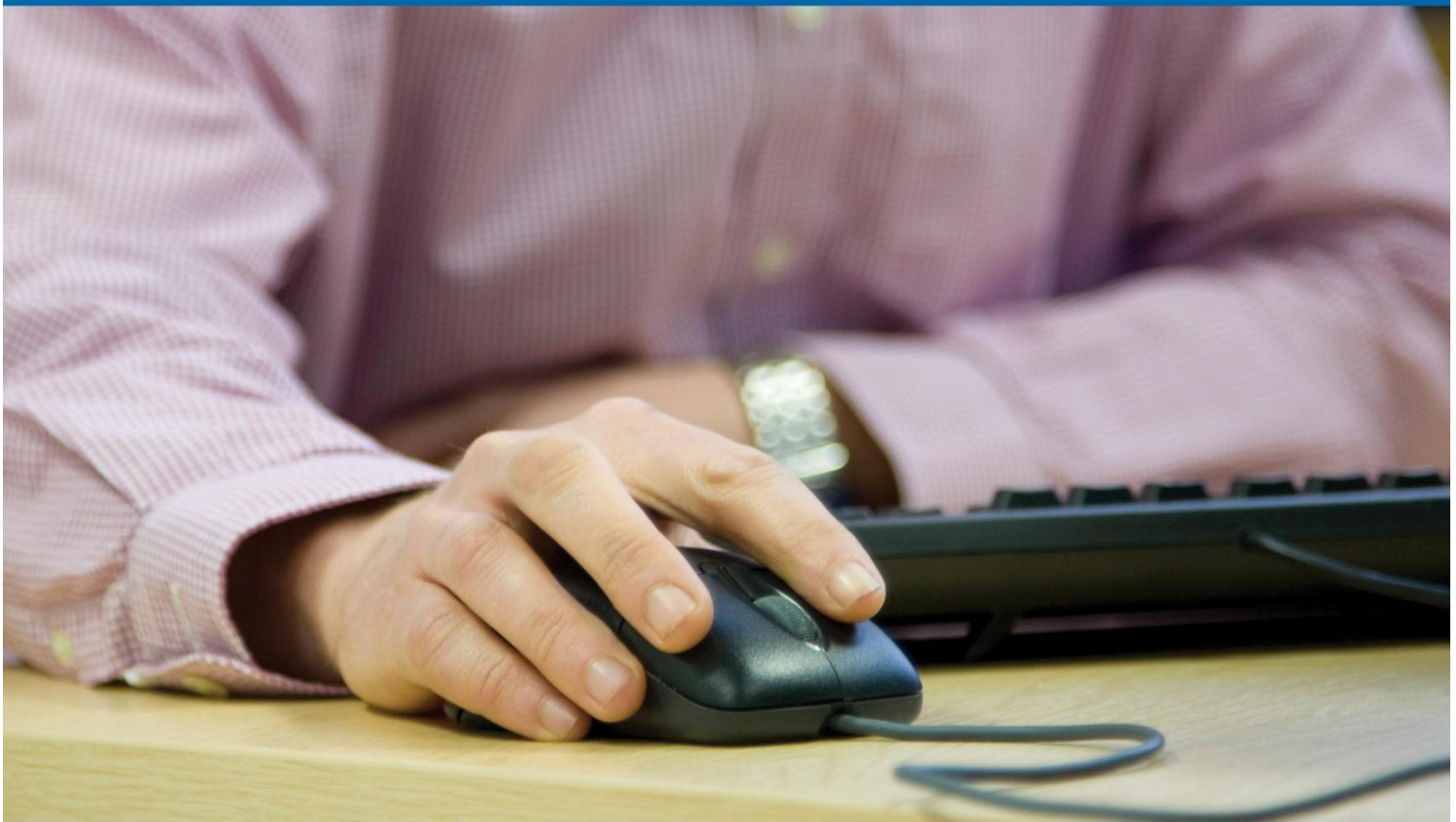


University of
Leicester

IT Services

Building a Corporate Service Site

DPP Starter Pack (Version 2)



www.le.ac.uk/webcentre

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Corporate Services

1. The purpose and importance of our website

The website is the University's most important tool of communication. It communicates almost all aspects of our business to a range of audiences, markets and stakeholders and is the most visible and accessible presence we can offer to the widest global audience. It is often the first experience people will have of the University, so it has to be the best one.

The website has now become an integral part of being a successful university; whether it be projecting image and managing reputation, or as a place for our markets and stakeholders to transact their business with us – from contacting someone, to requesting a prospectus, making a job application or identifying a research collaboration.

As a **communications tool** is it essential that we know and consider the following:

- What are we trying to communicate and enable?
- Why are we trying to communicate/enable it?
- Who are we communicating/transacting with?
- Is it relevant/of interest to them?
- What do we want them to do, think, or feel?

Our audiences are also interacting with many other organisations' websites. That means that expectations are high. Visitors expect a good quality experience: simple, consistent and logical navigation; clear, simple, meaningful and useful content; engaging, professional design. We need to make the right impression and enable our visitors to do easily the thing they have come to our website for.

So the **objectives** are:

- to enable tasks to be completed
- to project the right image of the university

How do the following fundamental aspects of website construction contribute to this?

Design – a consistent visual identity projects a professional image, helps the visitor know what website they are on, brings content to life and ties in with other communications mediums, which combined creates a recognisable identity for the University.

Content – this is where the rules of good communication are essential. Content will enable the visitor to find or do the thing they set out to, will inform the visitor and will help project the right image of the University. When content is good, visitors will want to engage.

Architecture/navigation – like design, consistency in navigation is essential. Like content, getting the right structure is key for getting the message (or direction) communicated. Architecture and navigation is the most important thing for the user experience. Confusing and inconsistent navigation will only alienate our visitors.

2. Management of the Departmental Plone Project (DPP) and escalation of issues

The Departmental Plone Project (DPP) is the sister project to the corporate website redevelopment project (CWR) – which is complete. Both seek to significantly raise the standard of the University's website; enabling it to be a strategic communications medium, essential to supporting the business activity and trajectory of the University. The DPP was mandated by the IT Portfolio Board, chaired by the Registrar, and has support from the Colleges.

The project will be managed by a Project Board comprising:-

- Helen Pennack –(Marketing Communications) – who will act both as the Project Executive and represent the needs of Corporate Services
- Directors of College Administration who will represent the needs of the Academic Departments
- Multimedia Services team who will be involved in helping to develop and implement the new websites

The Project Board is responsible for ensuring the overall success of the project by delivering a cost effective and acceptable solution. The Board will review the DPP migration plan at regular intervals during the course of the project and will be the final arbiters if a decision is required to move a department or service into a different cohort

The project team will periodically report to the Board on progress and any issues can be escalated to the Board via Jon Gunnell or Jon Shears (see below) at any point during the project.

Key Contacts

- **Project Manager:** Jon Gunnell – jag37@le.ac.uk – extension 7969
- **Multimedia Services Manager:** Jon Shears – jems1@le.ac.uk – extension 7971
- **Web team:** webteam@le.ac.uk or ithelp@le.ac.uk

3. Site development timeline and meeting planner

In order to get each Service done within the allotted time (**6 months**) we have developed a schedule of meetings and milestones which will serve to give site builders and the project team a sense of whether a site is on target or not.

Month	Date	Activity	Notes
Month 1	Start	Intro session	Outline objectives
Month 1	ASAP in first two weeks	IA Planning Meeting	Gather core info on tasks, audiences, services and objectives.
Month 1	10 days later	IA Review Meeting	Review/add to core info and finalise.
Month 2	Start	IA works on Site Plan	
Month 2	Middle	Review Site Plan and Sign it off	Could be two meetings to achieve sign off
Senior Management Checkpoint – Make sure the STRUCTURE is ok with Head of Division/Unit			
Month 2	By the end	Build empty site and hand over to service web team.	
Month 3	Middle	Review progress (phone)	
Month 3	End	Review progress (meeting)	
Month 4	Middle	Review progress (phone)	
Month 4	End	Review progress (meeting)	
Month 5	Middle	Review progress (phone)	
Month 5	End	Getting ready for sign off (meeting)	
Senior Management Checkpoint – Make sure the CONTENT is ok with Head of Division/Unit			
Month 6	Early	Sign off report	
Month 6	Before End	Site ready for Launch, Archiving and Redirects.	

4. Implementing Service X

Service X is two things:

- Conceptually, it is a method via which the University can achieve clear and well organised Corporate Services sites
- Practically, it is a simple service-led model for a 'typical' corporate service with accompanying advice about using that model and the customisations that can be made to it.

Building a Service X site (stages and layers)

Creating a service X site involves a number of steps, some of which are quick, others of which are time consuming and all of which can be made easier if the task is spread amongst a small group of key individuals.

At each of the stages the emphasis is on either gathering and/or organising information about the service. As the information is assembled it is applied to the site in layers. The stages are as follows:

1. Identify your site's over-arching objectives (you'll start this at the DPP Introductory Session)
2. Identify your audiences
3. Identify and define your key services and tasks
4. Identify key service resources e.g. PDFs, docs, videos
5. Identify required new or missing content
6. Define 'About Us' section e.g. mission/vision statement, structure, staff list
7. Think about News and Announcements
8. Rationalise your structure (identify who needs access to what)
9. Build site folders
10. Add content and review site (test if users can complete tasks)
11. Develop portlets
12. Add the homepage
13. Sign-off
14. Syncing with the Corporate level site

The first eight points on this list relate to planning and can be done on either paper or a PC (using Word for example) before a person even has to interact with the new Plone Content Management System (Plone CMS).

*Important note: Some people may combine **Identifying key services, identifying audiences and rationalising your structure** into a single brainstorming session. We suggest that you deal with them one at a time as it can be confusing to work on them together.*

Identify the over-arching objectives for the site

During your initial DPP introductory session you will be encouraged to examine the broad objectives of your site. You may well follow this up with a more detailed look at them in the first initial planning meeting you have with the web team.

Objectives should be general rather than specific – as later on you'll identify the more specific tasks that people will be looking to complete on your site. For example, an overall objective might be "To cut down on face to face and phone support by making support materials available via the web site",

whereas a specific task a user might want to do is “Download support materials in PDF format”. You can have as many objectives as you like but remember to keep them general. Your objectives should guide the development of your site – perhaps not in a direct way – but more as something against which the site can be compared at any point to see if it successfully doing what it is supposed to.

Identify your audiences

Right from the outset you need to consider the audience for your site.

Gather a selection of key individuals from your service and get together in a room (as you may have done when identifying your Services). Get some post-it notes, pens and a big sheet of paper - and start, as a group, to brainstorm anything that comes to mind about potential audiences for the site. There are no right or wrong answers - the key thing initially is to get as much as possible collected.

Then step back and look at what everyone has written. Eliminate any duplication and see if you can already see any logical groupings or areas where you may have been overly specific in identifying an audience.

Keep this stuff safe for later and move on to the next step.

Identify and define your key services and tasks

At the heart of Service X approach to (re)building a Corporate Services web site is the requirement to define the **core services** offered by that particular unit. Obvious or not, clearly defined services are a critical requirement and something that can be difficult to achieve. Forget internal University hierarchies and sometimes even forget office boundaries – the ultimate goal is a clear presentation of ‘services’ to visitors to the site. Some services span multiple offices in Corporate Services but our customers/users won’t care about that – they just want to be able to do the thing they came to the site to do.

When defining services it’s important to be clear and consistent – and to that end here’s an example of the type of information you might need to generate:

- What we provide
- What the user can expect
- What we expect from the user
- Availability
- Any charges
- FAQs and Related info/resources
- Help/contact point

What you are aiming for with these service definitions is something approaching a Service Level Agreement (SLA). Whether you adopt a full SLA, or simply define your services for the sake of clarity, depends on the approach taken in your particular division/office.

To help work out the organisation of the your services, work with colleagues, perhaps using big sheets of paper, pens and post-it notes and identify all the various elements of the service you provide. Write the various service names down on post-it notes and arrange them on a wall or sheet of paper, then look for groupings - logical ways in which the services might be expressed to users. If four of your services relate to a specific area then it might make sense to represent them in that way

to users of the site. Avoid at all costs organising your content on the basis of divisions that don't mean anything to your users e.g. grouping a bunch of services because the people responsible for them sit together in the office. Taking this approach should give you a meaningful list of services but double check it with other colleagues/potential users of your site to be sure. Hang on to this list as you'll need it in later stages.

The other critical things, to identify at this stage, are **key tasks** that your users will come to the site to complete. Generate a list of the most common things people come to your site to do. Keep this list with you as you develop your site as you'll need it later to test whether or not your site is working effectively.

*Important note: Some people may combine **Identifying key services, Identifying audiences and rationalising your structure** into a single brainstorming session. We suggest that you deal with them one at a time as it can be confusing to work on them together.*

Identify key service resources e.g. PDFs, docs, videos

Whether you're transferring an old site into the new content management system or creating a new service site from scratch it is vital to get to grips with your service's online resources. Resources can vary wildly but typical items include:

- Microsoft Office documents - Word docs, Excel files, PowerPoint slides, etc.
- PDF documents
- Imagery and photos
- Multimedia content - Video and audio files
- Forms

Draw together all these resources and organise them. They may just be general resources or they may relate to a specific service(s). Take the opportunity to:

- update or remove old/duplicate documents
- optimise any excessively large files if possible
- try to make documents of a similar type available in a consistent format
- convert Word docs to web friendly PDF where possible
- convert old paper forms and any old 'Mailform' forms to simple online plone forms
- contact the web team about imagery and photography (we would expect each division in the DPP to require new images)

When you come to actually building the resources area(s) in your site, depending on the quantity, it may be a good idea to include an A-Z index page so that they can be browsed. This gives users an alternative more direct route to finding them other than going through the service pages themselves.

Define 'About Us' section e.g. missions statement, structure, staff list

The 'About Us' or 'About <service name>' section is usually one of the simplest sections to create. As a bare minimum it should include:

- A mission/vision statement for the division/service
- A simple organisational chart or clear explanation that outlines the structure of the division/service e.g. IT services consists of three sub areas Customer Services, Corporate Information Services and Infrastructure Services - each with different responsibilities.
- A staff list - which should give clear contact details (email, telephone) for members of staff and, if available, a small photograph. The list should be headed by the Director/Head of the particular service. It may also be helpful to organise the list into groups relating to particular services - if not, then use a straight alphabetical listing. If staff have a valid reason for not wanting their details shown on the web site then typically they have the option to opt out.
- You can put links to these areas on the homepage of your site for ease of access but they belong under 'About Us'.

Name	Role	Telephone	Email
Geraldine Barker	Destinations and Information Manager	0116 229 7756	gab7@le.ac.uk
Mantana Fung	SSDS Administrator	0116 229 7767	mf142@le.ac.uk
Paul Jackson	Director	0116 229 7757	pmj7@le.ac.uk
Matthew Mobbs	Learning Technologist	0116 229 7753	mjm33@le.ac.uk
Martin Pennington	Executive Administrator	0116 229 7752	mjp26@le.ac.uk
Melvyn Simpson	Destinations Assistant	0116 229 7758	ms308@le.ac.uk

Think about news and announcements

University service sites often have a requirement for either regular news or the facility to make announcements or both. Both can be accommodated with a Service X site without issue. The web team will help you create the mechanism via which to show news on your site.

Of critical importance, from a planning perspective, is accepting that a regular news or announcement feed will require ongoing effort from one or more people involved with the site. News can be both friend and foe to a web site - if it's up to date and relevant then it's hugely useful but if it's out of date then it can seriously undermine users' confidence in the service. The new service X templates allow content in this area to vary - if there are no announcements then that area simply doesn't show.

If you would like a news area but don't have any immediate news to put in it then you might consider starting with an announcement about your new site - and possibly one or more items on specific bits of your site. e.g. If you are offering a new form on your site then write a quick guide showing people how to use it and turn it into a news item.

Identify required new or missing content

By this stage you will have done a large part of the work of getting content together for your site. This is the ideal time to review your content and identify what, if any, new content is needed. New content can be used to fill gaps where content was missing or to address new areas which previously hadn't been described.

There is never going to be a better time to review site content than before the move into the Content Management System. It is worth the extra effort to revisit and improve content. It is harder to try and reorder/alter a finished site than it is to plan change in advance and incorporate those changes whilst the site is being moved across.

Rationalise your structure (identify who needs access to what)

With your audiences identified, and a list of key services, you are now ready for the most difficult part of the Service X approach - **rationalising your structure** (or in layman's terms **identifying who needs access to what**). Services are at the heart of the Service X approach but audience is also critical when thinking about how to represent those services to the outside world.

Gather your colleagues once more - and arm yourself with your **list of services**, your **list of audiences**, and the now familiar **pens, paper and post-it notes**. Your goal is to try and work out which services are needed by which audiences. This can be a powerful tool in helping you organise your site because a common realisation during this process is that, although you have different audiences, their needs may not be that different - and that can have a dramatic effect on the way you lay your site out. A founding principle of accessibility legislation is that a **good simple design is beneficial to everyone**. If you come to the conclusion that to differentiate between audience groups might lead to duplication of content then don't do it. Keep things simple. In your audience identification session you may have identified ten different stakeholder groups but if you can only make meaningful distinctions between two of them, then use just two broad groups. By way of example, when IT Services evaluated their site they identified numerous services but when it came to audiences they realised that it only really made sense to think in terms of what Staff and Students might want. It's conceivable that a service site may have so few services that the best thing to do is simply provide links to those services and leave it at that.

One distinction which it can be easy to forget, however, is that of **new visitor** versus **experienced user**. One simple way of dealing with this, without affecting your overall structure, is to provide special help pages aimed at, for example, new students or new staff. This way you can provide a gateway into your site without making life more complex for people that are already familiar with the site and know where to go. Links to these pages can be put onto your homepage and into the information boxes at the side of pages (portlets) so that they run throughout the site.

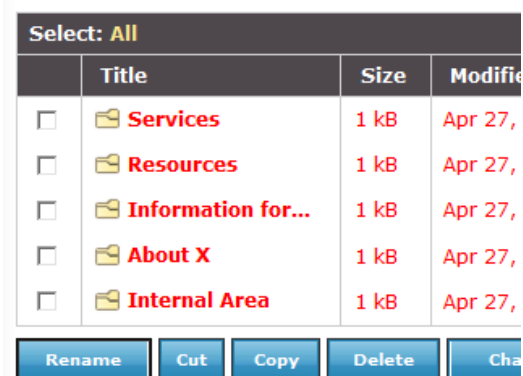
Doing this critical work will give you and your team the last element of the plan for your site, allowing you to proceed to the stage of actually building it. From a web team perspective it is much easier to interact with and understand a service if this work has been done - which means that the site can usually be completed sooner.

*Important note: Some people may combine **Identifying key services**, **Identifying audiences** and **rationalising your structure** into a single brainstorming session. We suggest that you deal with them one at a time as it can be confusing to work on them together.*

Build site folders

Armed with a clear plan for your site, either the web team or your service's web coordinator can begin to create a folder structure in the Plone CMS for your site. **All initial work should be kept private so that no half finished content is exposed to the outside world.**

Starting from scratch - create four folders:



Select: All			
	Title	Size	Modified
<input type="checkbox"/>	Services	1 kB	Apr 27,
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resources	1 kB	Apr 27,
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information for...	1 kB	Apr 27,
<input type="checkbox"/>	About X	1 kB	Apr 27,
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal Area	1 kB	Apr 27,

Buttons: Rename, Cut, Copy, Delete, Change permissions

- one for your **services**
- one for **resources**
- one for **information for...**
- and one for your **about <service name>** section

If required, you can add an optional staff only **internal area** folder - think about whether or not you have the need for an area with restricted access - if you do then assemble the material and we can set your site up to restrict access to whatever group/individuals suits (limited only by the what CFS groupings are available in active directory).

- Within the **Services** folder, sub folders and pages should be added for key services, using the list defined in previous stages.
- Within **Resources**, organise content into groupings based on the assessment exercises done earlier.
- Within **Information for...**, sub-pages will be added for the various audiences that you have identified as being important to your staff.
- Within **About <service name>**, add subsections for mission statement/vision, organisational structure and staff list.

At this stage it still might seem hard to visualise what the finished site will look like. That is perfectly understandable and it can seem like this right up until the final moment when the homepage is added to tie elements together. All you need to do at this stage is just to lay the foundations for your site, the rest will come later.

Note: There is a tendency, in fact it's almost a compulsion, at this and other stages to add numerous other folders into the structure - please try to avoid this urge at all costs. There should be almost nothing that can't be rationalised into the existing set of basic folders without impacting the effectiveness of your site. If the issue is that there is certain element, which is key to your service, that must be prominent, then there are ways of addressing this via the homepage and good use of portlets that preclude the need to just add it to the main navigation. One major aim of the Service X approach is to apply a consistent look and feel across Service sites and this is next to impossible if everyone takes a differing approach.

Add content and review (test if users can complete tasks)

This is the stage, that can often take the most time. You've planned and laid out your folders but now you actually need to put some content in them. Time can be saved here if work is done earlier on in the planning stage to identify what is and isn't needed - and if content, such as it is, is gathered together first in the form of Word documents or similar.

The bulk of this part of the job involves a lot of **copying and pasting** of text followed by judicious use of the available text styling options to lay out the pages in an attractive manner. Advice on good practice, both in terms of writing for the web and styling your content, exists in the web centre resource site (<http://www.le.ac.uk/webcentre>). A summary of the style guidance is included with this information pack. The web team will also be available throughout the process to provide advice.

At some point, you will have added enough basic content to be almost ready to launch. It's okay not to have developed certain elements of your site but the site shouldn't launch if there isn't a good

base level of content coverage. New Plone content is in a private hidden state by default anyway so there's no need to expose unfinished content to the world.

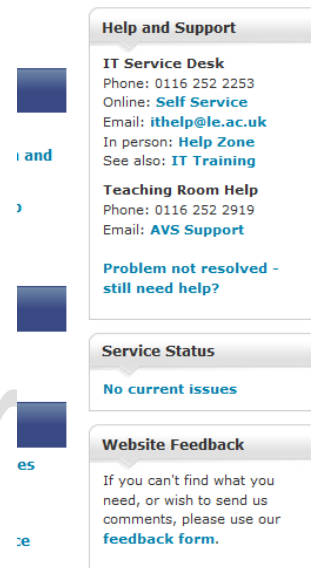
Now is a perfect time to review what you've done so far. Check with colleagues to see if any content is missing - and act on any major omissions.

Now is also the time to look again at the user **tasks** you identified earlier and see if it's possible to complete them easily using your site e.g. if someone would typically come to your site looking to download a form, can they easily find and download that form? If users can't complete the basic tasks that they've come to your site for then you need to rethink/reorganise and make sure they can. A simple way of handling this can be to make your key tasks into a quick links portlet – so that people have a quick way to jump to the info they need.

Develop portlets

The success of a website is heavily dependent on good site structure and a clear and simple navigation. **Portlets**, the information boxes that can be put at the side of sites, can be major asset in this area. Portlets give you the facility to run content through your entire site in a consistent manner and to append special content to specific pages should you wish to. Typical uses for portlets include:

- contact details
- quick links
- additional navigation
- news and/or events
- images
- downloads
- promote something

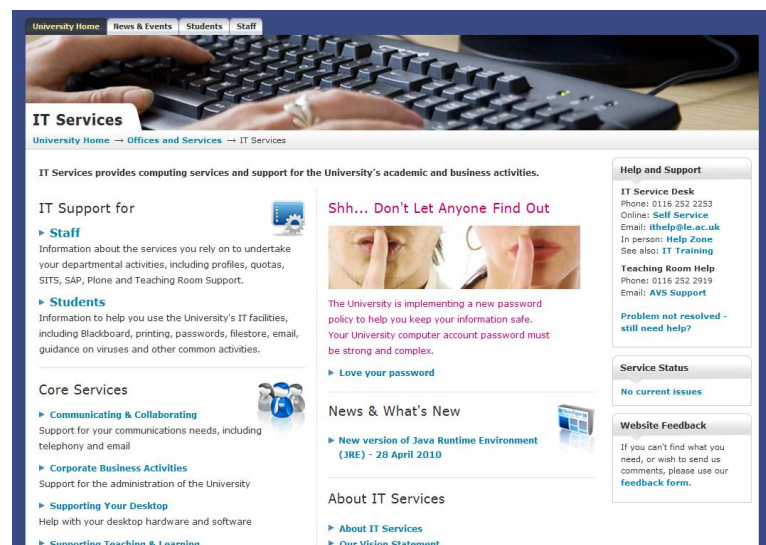


Sitting down and thinking about the highly customised use you can put portlets to can be very productive and it can help you avoid unnecessary customisation of the standard service X navigation.

Add the homepage

The final layer of Service X is the introduction of the **homepage**. The homepage brings all the elements you've been working on together and makes the site work as a finished thing.

Putting the homepage in place has a technical aspect to it that requires the input of the **web team** so at this point you will need to get back in contact with them to progress things. Before you do



this, check that you have gone through all the other outlined steps and take the opportunity to review your site again.

The prescribed layout of a Service X homepage is as follows:

- The **left hand side of the main page area** is given over to **audiences** and **services**. This is where you will put links to the special **Information for** pages that represent your audiences' routes into the services you defined. This area should be entitled **Support for** or **Information for** or similar. Accompanying the links are short descriptions that give users a clear idea about the content they are heading to. In the image above of the IT Services homepage you can see links to specific support for Staff and Students. If you wish you can also make your **Services** directly accessible in this section by outlining the main service areas if there are only a few. It is also a good idea to include a direct link here to your A-Z listing of **All services** if you have one.
- The **right hand side of the main page area** is given over to **Announcements, News** and the **About X** section links to vision, structure and staff list. The announcements area doesn't have to be called that if you would prefer something else e.g. SSDS called their area 'What's hot'.
- **Right hand portlets** - which should, as a minimum, include **contact details** in some form. This area is the place you should use to draw attention to anything that you particularly want to highlight e.g. IT Services use this area to give people service status information and the opportunity to feedback.

Once the homepage is in place and has been configured then it is an appropriate time to seek sign-off for the site from the web team so that it can be published.

5. Design Options and Guidelines

One aspect of creating your website in a content management system such as Plone is that you don't have to spend time and effort designing it from scratch. Listed below are some of the benefits of using a Plone design:

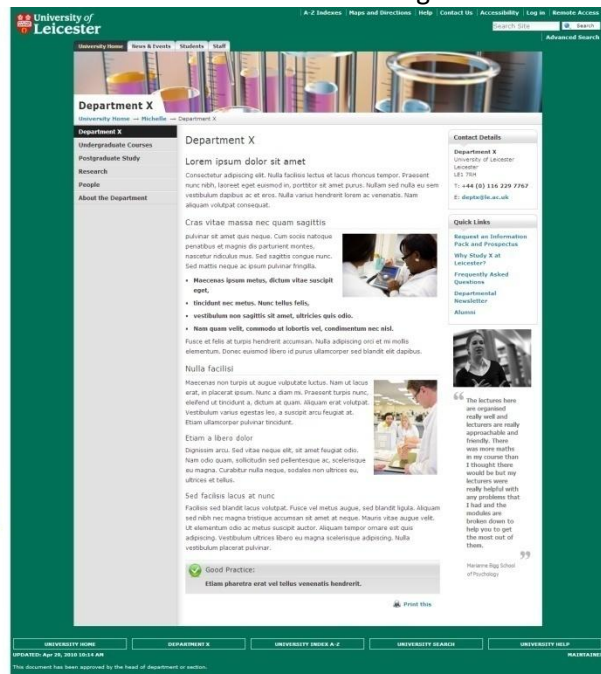
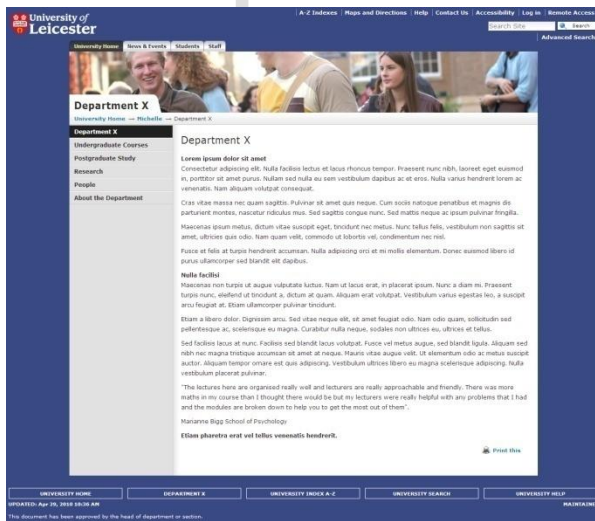
- **Accessibility and usability** – the web site has been designed to work in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (v1.0)
- **Corporate Identity** – this is automatically applied to your site for you.
- **Multi-browser support** – is a recurrent and persistent problem for websites. As standards change and new browser versions are released, sometimes offering new features without backward compatibility, the job of ensuring web pages are accessible to the largest possible audience is a necessary but time consuming activity. This will be taken care of centrally.
- **Updated designs on a regular basis** - the design layer can be completely reworked without the need for any adjustments to structure or content. We aim to update the overall visual design every two to three years and make continual improvements regularly.
- **Easy to maintain without losing consistency** - because content is stored separately from design, the content from all authors is presented with the same, consistent design.

The overall design is created and controlled centrally. This allows you to focus on creating and refining your content. You as department or service are encouraged to make the most of your content using the inbuilt styles. A little effort goes a long way:



Large blocks of text are difficult to read on screen

A little effort spent applying the design features described below will make a huge difference

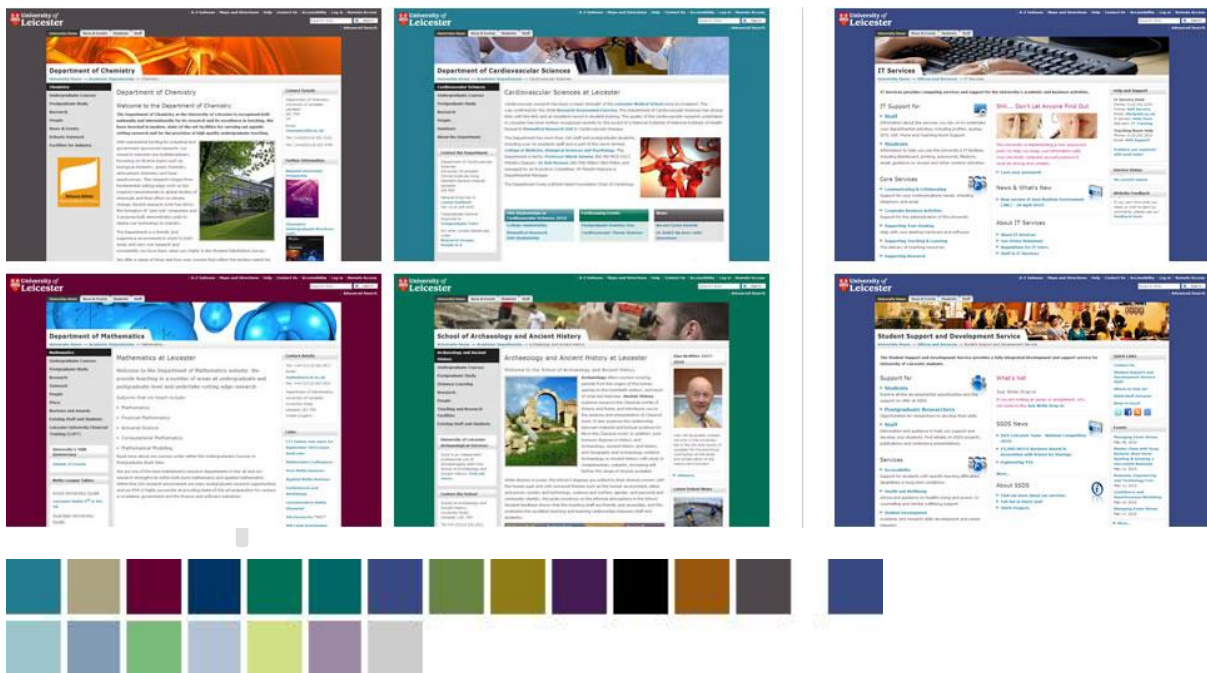


Website Skins

When your website is ready to go live, a skin is applied. These skins ensure that there is consistency throughout the various sections of the University of Leicester website in terms of visual style, navigation, usability and accessibility.

If your department currently has significant printed material (such as a brochure) that uses a particular colour palette then your website must use the same palette to achieve visual consistency between the two.

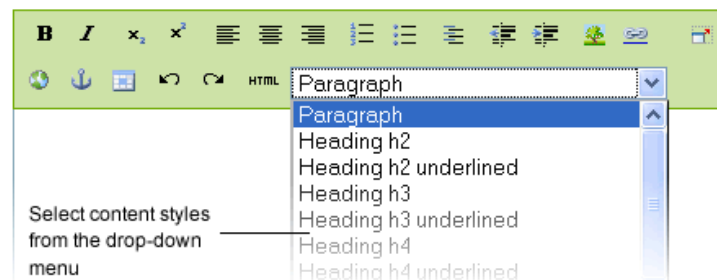
The Office/Service skin does not have different colour variations and should use Lagoon.



Using basic content styling

Basic text formatting is fundamental to presenting your content well whilst making your web pages both usable and accessible.

Styles are applied to content by using the drop-down menu of the text editor whilst you are creating or editing your web page in Plone. Simply highlight the content that you would like to apply the style to (by clicking and dragging) and then select the appropriate style from the drop-down menu.



Top styling tips:

- **Use headings correctly** - they are the backbone of any web page. Heading styles must be used in descending order, so text with an h2 heading can be subdivided using h3 headings.
- **Paragraphs must be kept reasonably brief** - small chunks of text are much easier to read on screen than large, unbroken paragraphs which often appear off-putting.
- **Lists are a great way to present text on the web** - using lists (either numbered or bulleted) allows you to keep your text brief and concise whilst making it much more scan-able and easier to read on screen.
- **Avoid using centred and justified text** – by default all text in Plone is left aligned and should remain so unless there is good reason to alter it. For instance you could use centred text beneath a centred image.

Styling habits to avoid:

- **Don't forget to clean your text** - one of the most commonly made mistakes when creating web pages is to copy and paste text directly from its source, another web page or document, into your site. The text you see on web pages or in documents (e.g. Word) is the result of more complex coding and styling information that sits beneath it unseen. So when you copy text you don't just copy the text, you get all the code as well. And when you paste that text and code into another web page e.g. Plone, it can wreak havoc on that page - creating strange styles in your content. Sometimes the effects can be quite mild and other times very strong - but regardless, these problems can be avoided by sticking to a simple routine.
 1. Open the Plone page you wish to **paste into** and click the **Edit** tab.
 2. Find the page/document you want to **copy from**, **Select** the text and **Copy**.
 3. Open **Notepad** and **Paste** your text which will turn it into **simple text** and strip it of almost all styling information.
 4. **Select** this new simplified text in Notepad and **Copy** again.
 5. **Paste** the new simplified text into your Plone page.
- **Avoid CAPITALISATION** - Please avoid the urge to capitalise text unless it is appropriate to do so (such as when using acronyms or trademarks etc). Capitalised text gives the impression that you are SHOUTING at your website users. Capitalised text is more difficult to read on screen. If you would like to emphasise text, it is much better to use another text style which is meant for that purpose such as highlight paragraphs or icon paragraphs.
- **Avoid fake spacing** - please don't try to 'pad-out' your pages or attempt to create extra 'white space' by leaving empty lines between paragraphs. This will mean that the text spacing on your pages is inconsistent with the rest of the University's website. Style elements such as line-height, font-size, paragraph-spacing etc are all set centrally in Plone and are based on current web guidelines or standards. If you think that there is a problem with the way that these elements have been set then we would prefer that you let us know about it so that, if necessary, we can adjust these properties accordingly.

Why make the effort?

Breaking your body text up into short paragraphs and using lists, headings and sub-headings appropriately will make your pages much more useable. Here's an example of a department page with nothing done to it:

Department X

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nulla facilis lectus et lacus rhoncus tempor. Praesent nunc nibh, laoreet eget euismod in, porttitor sit amet purus. Nullam sed nulla eu sem vestibulum dapibus ac et eros. Nulla varius hendrerit lorem ac venenatis. Nam aliquam volutpat consequat. Cras vitae massa nec quam sagittis pulvinar sit amet quis neque. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Sed sagittis congue nunc. Sed mattis neque ac ipsum pulvinar fringilla. Maecenas ipsum metus, dictum vitae suscipit eget, tincidunt nec metus. Nunc tellus felis, vestibulum non sagittis sit amet, ultricies quis odio. Nam quam velit, commodo ut lobortis vel, condimentum nec nisl. Fusce et felis at turpis hendrerit accumsan. Nulla adipiscing orci et mi mollis elementum. Donec euismod libero id purus ullamcorper sed blandit elit dapibus.

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 [Send this](#)  [Print this](#)

Here's the same example page with headings, images, bullets, portlets and text styles applied to it. It looks a lot more professional.

Department X

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Consectetur adipiscing elit. Nulla facilis lectus et lacus rhoncus tempor. Praesent nunc nibh, laoreet eget euismod in, porttitor sit amet purus. Nullam sed nulla eu sem vestibulum dapibus ac et eros. Nulla varius hendrerit lorem ac venenatis. Nam aliquam volutpat consequat.

Cras vitae massa nec quam sagittis

pulvinar sit amet quis neque. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Sed sagittis congue nunc. Sed mattis neque ac ipsum pulvinar fringilla.

- **Maecenas ipsum metus, dictum vitae suscipit eget,**
- **tincidunt nec metus. Nunc tellus felis,**
- **vestibulum non sagittis sit amet, ultricies quis odio.**
- **Nam quam velit, commodo ut lobortis vel, condimentum nec nisl.**



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 **Good Practice:**

Etiam pharetra erat vel tellus venenatis hendrerit.

 [Send this](#)  [Print this](#)

Contact Details

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University of Leicester
Leicester
LE1 7RH

T: +44 (0) 116 229 7767
E: deptx@le.ac.uk

Quick Links

[Request an Information Pack and Prospectus](#)

[Why Study X at Leicester?](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Departmental Newsletter](#)

[Alumni](#)

Tables

Tables are an important part of most websites. They are used to present information clearly and effectively to a website visitor. However, poorly styled tables can be illegible and ambiguous.


Avoid too many colours

You must be careful not to apply too many different cell styles to a single table. Too many colours can cause visual clutter which can make the table confusing and unattractive. As a general rule you should avoid using any more than two different cell colours per table.

Avoid using styles unnecessarily

Cell styles should only be applied if there is a reason for doing so. For example, cell styles can be used to highlight an important cell/row/column or differentiate between two or more similar cells, rows or columns. Styling cells arbitrarily can cause confusion by giving prominence to certain information unnecessarily.

Column Heading	Column Heading	Column Heading
Row 1	Row 1	Row 1
Row 2	Row 2	Row 2
Row 3	Row 3	Row 3



Column Heading	Column Heading	Column Heading
Row 1	Row 1	Row 1
Row 2	Row 2	Row 2
Row 3	Row 3	Row 3



Currently there is no easy way to control the column widths of tables using the editor, the column will expand in relation to the content. The web team have developed a simple technique to control this but it involves adjusting the code in the HTML view. Please contact the web team for advice and training.

Imagery

Web images take up the majority of the download time in most Web pages. But if you optimize your images you will have a faster loading website. Tutorials about optimising and cropping your images can be found in the web centre.

Maximize the visual impact of the photo by cropping tightly around the subject matter.



Image Library

You **can** use images from the University's Image Library <http://assetbank.le.ac.uk> freely or you can purchase images from stock image retailers. Avoid using stock images of people, all people depicted as staff or students should be genuine. All images sizes stated below are pre-programmed into our image library when you choose to download an image for use on the web. Additionally the image will be optimised for you, so no need for Photoshop.

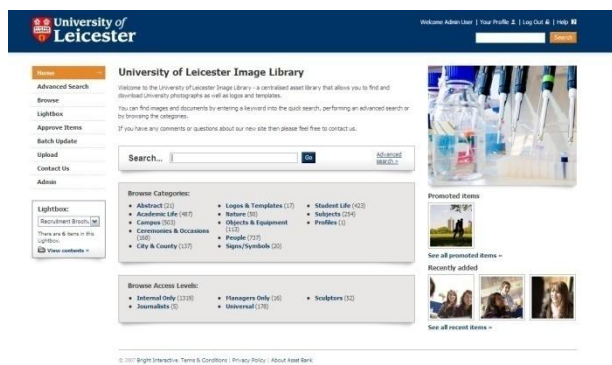
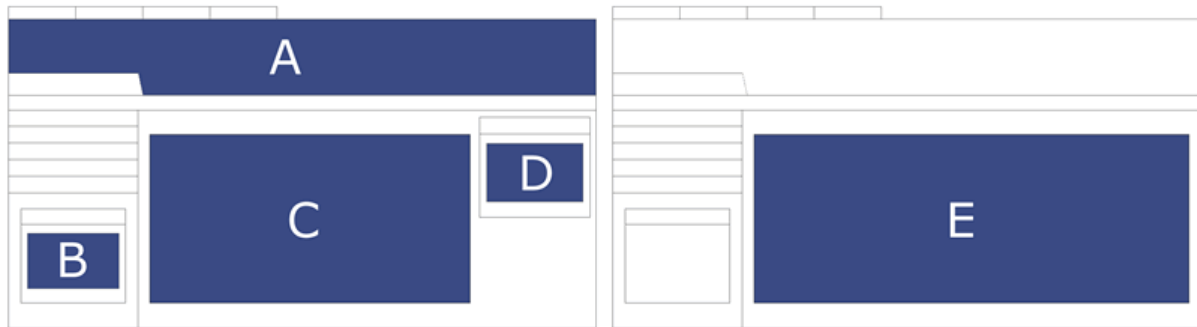


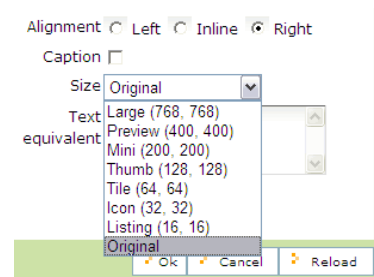
Image sizes



- **A – 990 x 140 pixels (banner graphic)**

Banner graphics have to be added to websites by a member of the Web Team. Therefore to request a banner graphic please email webteam@le.ac.uk. These can be site, folder or page specific.

- **B – 165 pixels (max width)**
- **C – 540 pixels (max width)**
- **D – 175 pixels (max width)**
- **E – 730 pixels (max width)**

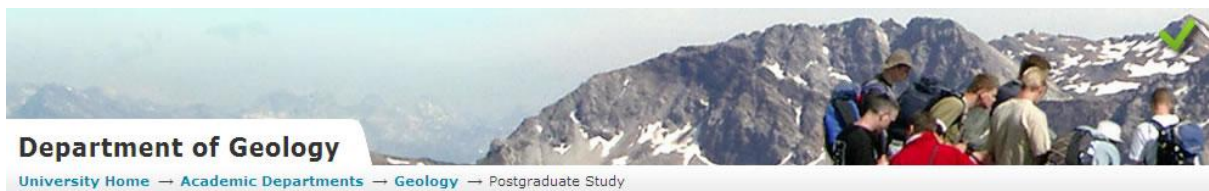


When inserting images into your page, select the **original size** option from the drop-down menu. Please resize your images before placing them onto web pages. Downloading large images is like sucking a grapefruit through a straw!

By default the caption option is checked, please remember to uncheck this unless you intend to use it as it creates unnecessary space around the image.

Using images effectively

Please try, wherever possible, to choose subject specific images rather than generic buildings, campus shots or smiling students. The best generic images are used extensively in the corporate level of the website, departments and offices should select images that distinguish themselves from each other and highlight their expertise.



Added Extras

Paragraph icons:

The paragraph icon styles are a more advanced form of text formatting that allows you to emphasise particular paragraphs of text. When used consistently throughout the University of Leicester website, the paragraph icons provide great visual clues to help website visitors use your pages and find the information that they require more effectively.



Example:

Select the **Example Paragraph** style.



Help:

Select the **Help Paragraph** style.



Information:

Select the **Information Paragraph** style.

Quotes Styles:

Quotes fall into three main categories: to bring credibility, to educate and to validate.

Please remember to provide a quote reference directly below and style it with the accompanying **Quote Reference** style.

“

The lectures here are organised really well and lecturers are really approachable and friendly. There was more maths in my course than I thought there would be but my lecturers were really helpful with any problems that I had and the modules are broken down to help you to get the most out of them.

”

Marianne Bigg School of Psychology

A-Z listings:

These are useful for long listings of both services or staff listings.

A-Z of Services



A

- [Air conditioning](#)
- [Access cards](#)
- [Asbestos management](#)

B

Corporate Services

Image slideshows

Image slideshows or image rotators, are a way of cycling through a series of still images on a web page. They are a great way of drawing the attention of your website users and making static web pages more dynamic.



Image slideshows have to be added to websites by a member of the Web Team. Please visit the web centre for a more detailed description of how to get a slideshow created for you.

6. Writing for the web

Everyone who visits your website does so because they want to complete a task. They may want to find a piece of information, or contact someone, or apply for something. The content of your website must be based around helping your visitors to complete their tasks. This is the main reason why text should be written differently for each medium. The web is a user-led medium.

Seven simple steps to writing better web content

1. Omit needless words - remove half of the words on a page and then try to remove half of what's left.
 - If possible avoid small talk/padding - web visitors want to get at the content.
 - Keep your instructions to a bare minimum.
 - Use bulleted lists where possible.
2. Think about your audience and what they want.
3. Links must describe what a user will get when they select them - 'click here' is not acceptable.
4. Try to avoid dead end pages - pages work best if they end in an action.
5. Be clear and unambiguous - avoid jargon and abbreviations.
6. Be consistent in your use of punctuation and grammar
7. Use headings correctly - they are the backbone of any web page.

The **Web Centre** contains detailed advice on writing for the web – but your principle contact for advice in this area is the **Senior Web Communications Officer**.

Key Contact

- **Senior Web Communications Officer:** Mike Simpson – mjs76@le.ac.uk – 2106
- **Web team:** webteam@le.ac.uk
- **Web centre:** www.le.ac.uk/webcentre

7. The sign-off process

All new sites that go live at the University require sign off from the web team. What this entails, in practice, is that a site, once close to completion, is reviewed by an Information Architect, Multimedia Designer and Web Communications officer who all contribute comments to a single report that is sent to the site developer. The report will contain suggestions for final amends and improvements which, once enacted, mean that the site is ready to go live. Typically sign off is sought via a request to the IT helpdesk and the web team usually ask for at least 5-10 working days to respond.

Archiving and redirects

Directly after sign off, is the archiving and redirecting stage. Anyone with an old site on the CWIS will need that site turned off (either completely or partially) and possibly one or more redirects put in place to get traffic that was going to the old site address to come to the new site address. There's nothing worse than visiting a site and discovering it has moved without a note or link about where it has moved to. Users can also request new redirects at this point if they are interested in a shorter URL e.g. **www2.le.ac.uk/offices/estates** could become **www.le.ac.uk/estates**.

Both these tasks may take some time depending on the commitments of our developers.

Corporate Services

8. Support during the Departmental Plone Project (DPP)

During the DPP the support model is different for those groups represented in the various cohorts. There is a detailed plan for the migration of sites over into the Plone CMS. Academic Departments and Corporate Services have been assigned to a series of cohorts. Each cohort is dealt with in a specific six month time slot. When a particular cohort is active, the Departments and Services in that group are each assigned a contact within the web team. This web team person becomes their dedicated go-to person for any issues and problems – prioritising support for them over support for anyone outside of the DPP.

The kind of support provided will range from general advice, either by phone or email, to more hands on help with parts of the site should the need arise. This could include help with:

- moving content folders
- styling page content
- creating forms
- adding new folders
- setting up news or events feeds
- adding portlets
- setting up homepages
- adding images
- adding content

Departments and Corporate Services will normally meet their web team contact at their cohort introductory training days. If for some reason they don't then their web team contact will arrange a separate meeting shortly afterwards.

Requests for information and/or changes to sites will need to come through the normal IT help channels (ithelp@le.ac.uk or webteam@le.ac.uk) but they can be marked for the attention of a specific contact.

Appendix 1. Objectives sub-table

General Corporate web site objectives

Site Objective	How that objective can be achieved
Enable Customers to Self-Serve (find the info they need without contacting the service)	Identify your site's tasks and the audiences you are serving - and whether those tasks can be accomplished online or elsewhere.
Site will be easy to navigate	Classify and group the tasks into something the user can easily interpret.
Site will clearly show, through effective navigation and a clear homepage, exactly what services it offers to the user.	Define and group services from a user perspective.
Site will be focussed on serving user needs rather than reinforcing organisational structures within the University.	Define and group information from a user perspective.
The site should cater for the audiences it has identified it wishes to serve.	Identify audiences and how their needs differ.
Users will be able to accomplish the tasks identified and agreed during the planning process.	Identify tasks and measure/test the site against these tasks.
Site will serve the needs of the owner, without compromising the needs of the users. E.g. Site may be an important channel for pushing information to users.	Identify owner needs and how these can be catered for.
Visually and in terms of content the site will conform to the defined standards of the University e.g. corporate identify, web writing standards, service X template, etc.	Adopt defined visual and structural elements.
Site will be reviewed at regularly intervals to ensure content is up to date.	Identify responsibility for web content (e.g. web coordinator) and schedule regular meetings. Identify a process for knowing when content is out of date.