



Supporting our strategy through good leadership

Delivering the new strategy at his first all-staff address, the Vice-Chancellor made clear that plans were underway to improve our leadership skills. Mentioning the results of the last staff engagement survey, he said: “You told us that we need to improve our leadership and I think the message was that we need to improve leadership and management at all levels, and that’s what we’re going to do.”

The University recognises the key role leaders and managers play in enabling their teams to successfully deliver our vision and strategy, and has initiated a project to develop the Leadership and Management Framework (LMF) to support leaders and managers to continue to improve. And, as Executive Sponsor of the project, the Vice-Chancellor will be taking a close interest in the outcome.

The LMF project is designed to support all staff at the University, from academic members of staff leading research teams, teaching and driving enterprise forward to those working in the wide variety of roles across the professional services. It’s about embedding good leadership and management capability across the institution to enable everyone to perform at their best.

For staff, by staff

A key principle of the project is to work collaboratively across the University to create and deliver the framework. To do this, the project team invited staff, including union representatives, to volunteer to help with the initiative.

Following a fantastic response from 80 volunteers, 33 people, representing a complete cross section of the University, were selected to form a working group. The remaining volunteers are also involved via a separate feedback group.



Sarah Marshall, Head of Talent and Development in Human Resources, comments:

“ We had a huge response to our request for volunteers for this project, which shows how passionate people are about improving the University’s leadership capability. Choosing the volunteers was based on getting representation from all areas and levels, including union representatives. It’s important that we end up with a framework that’s been developed by the staff, for the staff. ”

One of the working group members, Tim Woolman, Design Service Experimental Officer in Engineering and the Environment, explains what motivated him to get involved:

“ The project offers me the chance to work with colleagues representing diverse roles and to contribute to what could hopefully improve people’s working lives in many parts of the University. ”

Leadership behaviours needed to achieve our strategy

The first working group meeting was held in January with a visit from the Vice-Chancellor, who shared his views on the importance of leadership. Since that time the group has met six times.

The group started by discussing what they considered to be good leadership behaviours. This was followed by a similar session with the feedback group. The next working group focused on prioritising the behaviours that would best support the delivery of our University principles: quality, sustainability, collegiality and internationalisation.

Marika Stone, East Asia Administrator in the International Office, shares her experience of choosing these behaviours:

“ It’s really interesting to see the types of behaviours that are being identified by the group. There is a real emphasis on the need to embed the ‘softer’ people skills, which contribute to personal awareness and working with, and developing, others as well as the ‘harder’ skills. ”

The discussion resulted in around 48 descriptions, which have been reviewed by the working group. The project team then compared these descriptions with leadership behaviours and frameworks from other universities, public and private organisations to produce a ‘straw man’ of behaviours that the working group continued to fine tune through robust conversations. The working group have ensured that the behaviours are meaningful, the language is appropriate for all our people and that they align with, and will help to deliver, our vision and strategy.

During the latest update from the project team, the Vice-Chancellor was very supportive of the work completed to date and said: “I look forward to discussing the behaviours further at the Executive Board in April.”

Next steps

The project team, with the help of the working group, will now develop the blueprint for the framework and, once agreed, the framework will be built.

The project team would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have contributed so far and look forward to continuing the good work with them.

If you have queries about the project, please contact one of the following:

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