

The University of Sheffield

Corporate Information and Computing Services

Planning Statement

Our Vision

“We will be an innovative and influential department, respected by the University and recognised as a leader in the sector, delivering excellent customer focussed services”

Debated and agreed by World Café Events to which all members of the department were invited to.

Strategies

Departmental strategies inform planning, objective setting and the business processes of the department. They are aligned with the Information Strategy and Our Shared Vision.

Existing strategies are:

- Technology
- Teaching and Learning
- Customer Service
- Communications

A Research Support Strategy is under development. All are attached as Appendix A.

Objectives

Objectives for the year are set at department, section and team level, and are communicated and available to the whole department. Progress against team objectives is measured throughout the year. Department and Section objectives are listed in the programme definition (see below).

Developments

New developments are managed by the CiCS Programme Board as part of the departmental programme of projects. The Programme Definition document is attached as Appendix B.

Other Programmes oversee specific University initiatives, including the SAP Programme and the University Collaboration Improvement Programme.

For Business systems, Application Groups receive all requests for new developments for prioritisation, with individual projects then going to the CiCS Programme Board.

Benchmarking and KPIs

SLAs have measures which are collected regularly and reported to the SQT. These include standard IT KPIs such as response time, measurement of performance, uptime etc.

The Department takes part in a student satisfaction survey every year, and carries out its own staff survey every 2/3 years.

Reviews of individual services are carried out as part of a rolling programme, see:

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/cics/consultation>

Regular RUGIT informal benchmarking takes place (eg comparison of development Hype cycles) and we have recently participated in a RUGIT benchmarking survey, the results of which are awaited.

Membership of Gartner is important for informal benchmarking against non HE Institutions.

Periodically CiCS is reviewed by an external assessor, Professor John Beilec from Drexel University.

Resources

A large proportion of the CiCS budget is staffing - the development and maintenance of systems and infrastructure is very staff intensive. As new technologies emerge, staff have to be redeployed and retrained. As user expectations rise and more services are demanded by customers, more infrastructure staff need to be deployed to support them.

A significant part of the non-staffing budget is unavoidable costs:

- £600,000 on software licences (centrally negotiated site licences are more cost effective for the University)
- £ 250,000 on maintenance on equipment
- £250,000 on network charges and line rentals.

A capital fund covers large-scale projects and replacement of equipment, and projects funded from this can last up to 3 years. Recent projects have included the funding of a secondary machine room, generators, and an upgrade to the telephone system. Current projects include the implementation of a new email and calendaring solution and a collaboration suite. Recent heavy cuts to the non-staffing budget have meant that nearly all equipment costs including replacements are now also funded from this budget.

Several services generate income including Transport Services, Octagon Centre, Room and Parking Services, Drama Studio. This is used to offset costs, and invest in improvements where necessary.

The Print Service is entirely self-funding and makes a contribution to the University. However, this year income was significantly down due to a number of factors including SAP, the proliferation of departmental printers and a reduction in printing in general. A new print manager is currently being appointed to address these issues.

Currently, CiCS is managing to fund the non-staffing element of all current developments from existing budgets without additional resources, by using cost effective solutions and careful planning. This will only continue to be the case if funding remains constant – IT projects often last over more than one financial year and variations in funding are difficult to deal with.

However the staffing budget is very tight, with new services requiring additional support staff. Many services and systems are covered by single individuals, and the critical nature of IT to the institution means that 24*7 service is expected, but we are not funded to provide it. It is becoming more difficult to embark on new projects because of the tightness of cover in some areas. This year in order to meet our commitments to deliver new services we have transferred funding from our non-staffing budget to create new staff posts. It needs to be remembered that non-staffing fund can only be spent if there are staff available to carry out the work.

In the past the staffing element of new developments and their continued maintenance has been seen as a “free” resource which will need to be costed into all future developments. It also needs to be recognised that the deployment of enterprise-wide systems has resource implications for the user departments, and if this is not recognised it can be difficult to realise the benefits of new services.

Very large, enterprise projects will need additional funding. None are planned for this year, but we are expecting to carry out a review of our corporate systems next year, which could recommend replacement of the existing in-house student system with a bought-in package, a project which has the potential to be bigger than SAP. A SAP upgrade will also be necessary next year which will need to be funded as part of the SAP project. It is expected that this will be discussed by the SAP Programme Board