Student Accommodation System

Stage 1 Report

Project No: RS181318

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Contents

1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Accommodation System project has been formed to enhance the student experience by providing students with a self-service accommodation booking system, while also significantly reducing time-consuming manual processes for Residences staff.

The main benefits of the project are:

- Easier application process for students, quicker processing times and instant booking.
- Removal of manual processes for staff with improved staff satisfaction.
- 2-way integration with reservation system will ensure more efficient operation (e.g. when a student is checked out of a room in Rezlynx the room status in the accommodation system will update also).
- Less room for error when offering rooms.
- Self-service application will remove the need for a 28-day processing service level agreement.
- Self-service booking system rather than an application system.
- Improved management reporting to allow KPIs to be measured more reliably and quickly.
- Self-service will allow voids to be filled more quickly.
- Improved integration between LSE teams and processes with regard to accommodation

Following approval of the Stage 0 Project Proposal by the Portfolio Board on the 30th May 2018, Stage 1 of the project commenced and has now concluded with this Stage 1 Report.

Ian Spencer, the project's Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) agreed the appointment of Hannah Kearns as Project Executive and Jamie Moss as Project Manager and also approved the Project Board membership, which for this stage included Senior Users from Residences, Admissions and Finance, and a Senior Supplier from IMT. In addition, involvement of staff from each service in the project will be required and will be assigned where appropriate.

During Stage 1, work has been undertaken by the Project Manager, in conjunction with stakeholders to clarify the scope of the new project and to formally set up the project. This report summarises the output of this work. The work has included confirming the Project Brief, Objectives and Scope (Section 2), an assessment of Project Stakeholders (Section 3), defining Project Deliverables and Outcome Benefits (Sections 4 & 5), developing an approach to delivery (Section 6), creating an outline delivery plan (Section 7) and establishing a budget (Section 8). It also includes work to establish a Project team and to formalise the Governance arrangements (Section 9) and development of a Project level Communications strategy (Section 10).

Taking into account the currently identified Risks, Issues Assumptions and Dependencies (Section 11) the anticipated end date for the project will be the 28th February 2020. This is based on the estimated completion of Stage 1 by October 2018, Stage 2 by April 2019, Stage 3 by December 2019 and the end of Stage 4 in February 2020. Go-live of any new system should be complete before the end of January 2020.

Stage 2 will include the identification of business change requirements, the design of operational business processes and roles, the development of any IT solutions, together with an implementation strategy and associated business case.

The estimated cost to take the project through to Stage 2 (Section 12) is £2000 which will mainly cover workshop catering. It is not known at this point if a potential supplier will charge the project for time spent on initial implementation planning towards the end of Stage 2, and further funding may be requested at that point should this be the case.

The estimated total budget cost for the project to complete is unknown at the end of Stage 1 since a solution has yet to be defined.

The Project Board are asked to approve this Report and to instruct the Project Manager to proceed with work for Stage 2. The anticipated date for the Stage 2 report is 30th April 2019.

2   PROJECT BRIEF

The LSE is seeking to enhance the student experience by providing students with a self-service accommodation booking system, while also significantly reducing time-consuming manual processes for Residences staff.

The project aims to implement a self-service solution for students which will provide a user experience that meets student expectations of online booking systems.

The project plans to design, develop and implement a solution to support these aims, by January 2020.

2.1   Background

The current Hallpad accommodation application system was procured in 2010 and is now outdated in several regards:

a) It involves the completion of many manual processes by staff

b) It is convoluted and provides a poor student experience. Students must 'apply' for accommodation via Hallpad. RSO staff must then process the application and allocate a room, which they do within 28 days. A more efficient and customer friendly service would be a self-service system, which allows the student to choose their own room at the time of 'applying', subject to key business rules.

c) The LSE accommodation application system lags behind the accommodation application systems offered by other universities in terms of student experience and efficiency. Several other universities have implemented a self-service system already or are in the process of implementing this.

d) Key Management reports are not automated in the current application system. Reports on applications received, voids, and offers/acceptances/declines all require extensive manual intervention and are therefore prone to error.

2.2 Objectives

The project is looking to make two major improvements:

- Significant improvements to systems and processes
- An improvement to the student experience

This can be achieved by providing:

- A self-service solution where students can research information on halls, search availability and reserve a room at the time of online application
- A system which facilitates payments and integrates with student records and property management data
- A system which provides management reporting capabilities

The project will be considered successful if it delivers:

- An increase in positive 'speed of response' scores in the annual student satisfaction survey (currently 72%)
- An increase in positive 'accommodation system' scores in the student satisfaction survey (currently 74%)
- A reduction in time required for RSO staff to approve accommodation requests (currently 28 days)
- A reduction in RSO staff time spent on admin versus dealing directly with students
- A reduction in the number of accommodation-related complaints

2.3 Scope

2.3.1 Scope Overview

The project scope focuses on improving the student journey from booking a room through to checking out, and implementing the processes, policies, roles and systems that will support this.

The main stages in the student journey have been identified as:
- Making provisional room bookings
- Making confirmed room bookings
- Checking-in
- In-accommodation
- Checking-out

Additional stages have also been identified which apply to a minority of students:
- Making provisional early arrival bookings
- Cancelling room bookings
- Purchasing value added services
- Checking-in early
- Booking local services
- Reallocation
- Departing early

Scope will continue to be developed and refine throughout Stage 2, and a more detailed scope will be presented for consideration in the Stage 2 Report.

2.3.2 Detailed Scope

Processes
Designing processes to enhance the student journey and deliver the desired benefits:
- Providing access to accommodation information and rates
- Providing access to accommodation availability
- Enabling the collection of student accommodation needs
- Enabling the collection of student accommodation preferences
- Enabling the issuing of accommodation contracts
- Enabling the processing of internal and external funding sources

Policies
Adopting and amending policies to support new processes:
- Reviewing the Allocation Policy
- Reviewing the Warden Nomination Policy
- Reviewing the Exam Blackout Policy
- Reviewing the Cancellation Policy

Roles
Creating and amending job roles to support the generic responsibilities identified to carry out these processes:
- 'Booking Officer'
- 'Front of House'
- 'Service Specialist'

Systems

Implementing systems to support the new processes, and integrations where required to link to other systems and data sources that are out of scope:

- Implementing an accommodation portal
- Implementing an allocation tool
- Providing integration with 3rd party accommodation providers
- Providing integration with Finance One financial system
- Providing integration with student records

2.3.3   To Be Determined

Academic registration and its relationship to accommodation check-in is currently being investigated and a decision on whether this will be part of the project scope is still to be determined.

2.3.4   Out of Scope

The LSE application and admissions process itself is out of scope. The Student Accommodation System will take the outputs of this process to enable provisional bookings.

All financial transactions related to accommodation will take part in the new Finance One system which is being developed as part of the Finance One project. The Student Accommodation System should provide confirmation around payments which will be enabled with an integration, but it will not handle the payment or debt management itself.

Third-party accommodation providers and their internal processes are out of scope, though integrations may be required to interface with these.

The process around the release of exam results for undergraduate applicants is out of scope. However the outputs of this process will determine if a confirmed room booking can be made.

3   PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Effective communication with key stakeholder groups is essential to the project's success. An analysis of project stakeholders has been carried out at, together with engagement with the interested parties. As a result the project has identified the following key stakeholder groups who have an interest or influence in the project's outcome. Further stakeholder analysis will be completed in stage 2 of the project as part of the validation process.

Key Stakeholder Groups	Interests
Students and Applicants (On Project Board)	Students and applicants are the key user group and key beneficiary. Student involvement is critical to the success of this project and student representatives will be involved in scoping and development work.
	The project aims to provide students with an improved portal to convey accurate information, and to make and review accommodation bookings.
	Representatives of the student body will include the Residential Life team, LSE Students' Union, LSE Life and the Residential Halls Committee.

Residential Services and Catering Division (On Project Board)	The RCSD are the key non-student user group and will be impacted by significant operational changes. Particularly affected are the Residential Services team, Front of House team, Residential Life team and Systems team, but will also impact other teams in the division.
Admissions (On Project Board)	Admissions will be impacted by any integrations or process changes affecting applications and admissions.
Finance Division (On Project Board)	Finance will be impacted by any financial transactions relating to student accommodation including deposits, invoices and payments, as well as any debt management that may occur.
IMT (On Project Board)	IMT will provide key technical resources, planning and design for any new solution. They will also be responsible for the management and support for any new system.
Business Improvement Unit (On Project Board)	The BIU will be responsible for the delivery of the project and will provide project management, process design and training resource.
ARD Systems	ARD Systems will provide any integrations with student and applicant data.
Academic Departments	Some academic departments have students with early arrivals and non-standard arrival dates. Academic support staff will contribute to process design and validation.
Summer School	Summer School students have non-standard application processes and their students are in residence during non-standard dates, and will contribute to process design and validation.
LSE Language Centre	The Language Centre also has students in residence during non-standard dates, and will contribute to process design and validation.
Student Services	Student Services will be impacted by any integrations or process changes affecting Registration and Welcome Week.
Estates Facilities Management	The Facilities team will be impacted by any changes made which affect housekeeping arrangements in halls.

Stakeholder communications are addressed in Section 10 of this document.

4   PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The project will deliver the following by the end of Stage 2:

- Process Design Map
- Business Change Requirements
- Technical Requirements
- Conceptual Designs

- Architectural Review
- Option Selection
- Procurement (including technical review)
- Implementation Plan

The above deliverables are closely linked to the project objectives and requirements that have been gathered to date. As this project progresses through Stage 2, additional requirements, outcomes, deliverables or changes to scope will be identified. In addition to these, validation workshops will run regularly to gather feedback on proposals made so far.

There will also be an element of liaising with the Finance One project due to interdependencies between both projects, and any other projects or change initiatives that might impact the project.

5   PROJECT OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

It is expected that the following groups will benefit as a result of this project:

Students and LSE Applicants

- Improved application experience with greater control over arranging accommodation
- Improved experience of viewing outstanding bills and managing payments as a resident
- Potential access to further value-added services

Professional Services colleagues

- Greater automation of administrative tasks freeing up staff time
- Provide greater control and enhanced information to students reducing queries to staff
- Improved reporting capabilities for staff
- Improved integration between teams and processes related to student accommodation

6   APPROACH TO DELIVERY

The project will follow the BIU's Stage Gate project delivery framework which ensures the project is business-led and develops solutions that are fully implemented across the organisation.

The project will progress through four key stages which will plan, deliver and embed the solution as required by the School:

Stage	Stage Name	Stage Activities
Stage 1	Project Initiation (this stage)	This document
Stage 2	Solution Definition	Activities are summarised in Section 12 of this document
Stage 3	Solution Delivery	- System design - Architectural review - Training - Testing - Go-live planning
Stage 4	In Operation	- Implementation and rollout - Transition to 'business as usual' with operational handover - Decommissioning of any legacy systems - Project closure

6.1 Stage 1 Activities

The project has now completed Stage 1, and the following tasks have been completed:

- Initial stakeholder identification
- Project Board appointment
- Project Team appointment
- Project kick-off meeting
- Lean Game activity
- Straw map workshops (x2)
- Stage 1 Report (this document)

6.2 Stage 2 Planning

The main tasks to be completed as part of Stage 2 are as follows:

- **Process Design Workshops**
  Determine what new processes should look like in the new solution. Estimated x8.
- **Policy review**
  Determine which changes should be made to policy to support the new solution
- **Organisation and role review**
  Determine changes to be made to roles and organisational structures to support the new solution
- **Requirements**
  Technical requirements for systems and non-technical requirements for process, policy and roles
- **Requirement validations workshops**
  Review and approval of requirements by all stakeholders
- **Conceptual designs**
  Technical design and high-level technical diagrams
- **Architectural review**
  Review and assessment by Enterprise Architect and technical team
- **Option assessment and selection**
  Review of solution options and a decision by the Project Board on which will be adopted
- **Procurement**
  Tender process, review and selection of a supplier to provide the new system(s)
- **Implementation planning**
  Working with the chosen supplier to create an implementation plan for Stage 3
- **Solution validation workshops**
  Review and approval of options, and then of selected solution and supplier from all stakeholders
- **Stage 2 Report**
  Full business case and implementation plan for approval by Project Board and Portfolio Board

6.3 Business and Technical Project Management

The project will be managed by the Business Improvement Unit, which uses a business-led approach to inform change. In order to facilitate this approach Jamie Moss has been appointed Project Manager and will work with representatives from around the School to ensure that the project follows the stage gate approach, and will deliver an operational solution that meets the project objectives.

An overview of the stage gate framework and associated tasks can be found in Appendix 1.

The project will initially follow a PRINCE2 project management methodology which is supported by governance (including the Project Board), roles and responsibilities, documentation and project planning. This approach may be reassessed in a later stage of the project if appropriate.

7   PROJECT PLAN

A project plan has been developed to determine the initial key milestones leading to the end of Stage 2.

Milestone	Status	Completion Date
STAGE 1		
Project Board appointment	Complete	28/06/2018
Project Team appointment	Complete	28/06/2018
Project kick-off activities	Complete	12/09/2018
Straw map workshops	Complete	12/09/2018
Project Board approval of Stage 1 Report	Open	24/09/2018
Stage Gate 1 Approved	*Open*	*24/09/2018*
STAGE 2		
Process design workshops	Open	TBC
Process, policy and role review	Open	TBC
Requirements (technical and non-technical)	Open	TBC
Requirements validation	Open	TBC
High-level technical design	Open	TBC
Option review and selection	Open	TBC
Solution validation	Open	TBC
Procurement	Open	TBC
Project Board approval of Stage 2 Report	Open	TBC
Stage Gate 2 Approved	*Open*	*30/04/2019*
Stage Gate 3 Approved	*Open*	*13/12/2019*
Stage Gate 4 Approved	*Open*	*28/02/2020*

Stage 2 activities are TBC at this point as process design workshops must be completed before any further milestones can be completed. The nature of the workshops means that the completion date will be fluid until a full analysis of all process can be mapped, though there is an aim to have these complete by Christmas 2018.

The estimated stage gate completion dates reflect the current scope, requirements and resource availability. Should any part of this change significantly then completion dates will need to be revised accordingly, subject to approval by the Project Board.

8   PROJECTED COSTS

Projected financial costs for the project are based on an estimate of resources required to deliver the project through each of the stage gates. They also includes the estimated costs associated with procuring and deploying the required IT Systems, software and associated hardware.

No project funds are assigned to either Stage 1 or Stage 2. Detailed cost estimated will be submitted in the Stage 2 Report and a project budget will then be assigned by the Portfolio Board at the start of Stage 3.

9   PROJECT STRUCTURE

Project governance is led by the Project Board. The purpose of the Board is to provide accountability for the project and to make executive decisions. The Board has the power to approve plans and allocate resources to the project. Day-to-day operations of the project are managed by the Project Executive and Project Manager, who will enable implementation on behalf of the Board.

The Project Manager will work on behalf of the SRO with the Senior User and Senior Supplier representatives to facilitate the Users and Suppliers in working to achieving the project deliverables and in following the stage gate approach. The Users and Supplier representatives will form the basis of an overall Project Team, which will be set up to complete work packages. This structure is shown below:

9.1   Project Board

The Project Board has authority and responsibility for steering the project through each of the project stage gates. The Senior Responsible Owner is accountable for delivery and realisation of the benefits of the project. The roles and responsibilities of the Project Board are as follows:

| Name	Organisational Role	Project Board Role
Ian Spencer	Director of Residential Services	Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)
Hannah Kearns	Residential Services Manager	Project Executive and Senior User
Victoria Frost	Head of Residential Life	Senior User
Simon Beattie	Head of Admissions	Senior User
Laura Gilbert	Finance Manager	Senior User
John Harris	Assistant Director of Solutions and Partnering	Senior Supplier
Jamie Moss	Project Manager	Project Manager
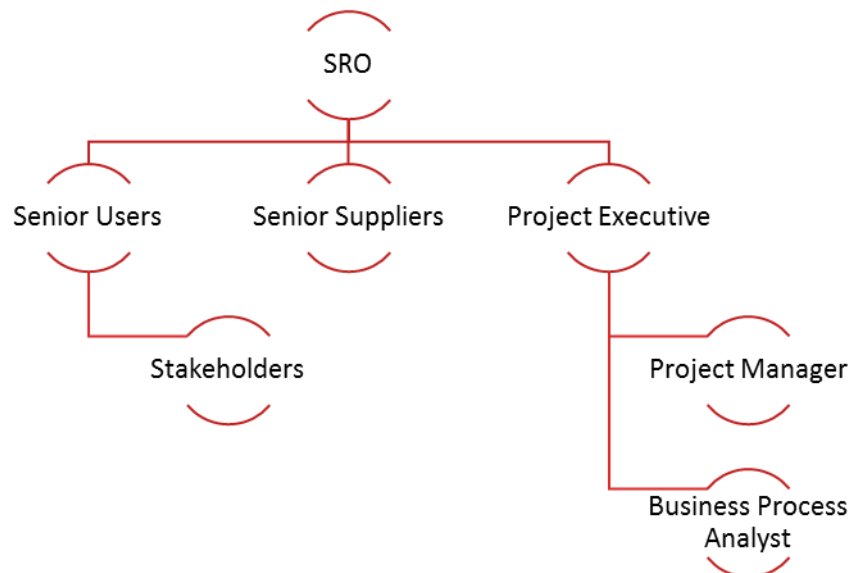
Further information on project roles can be found in Appendix 2.

9.2 Project Team

The Project Team will evolve over time to reflect the people needed to complete the tasks scheduled throughout the project.

Name	Organisational Role	Project Team Role
Alix Cork	Business Process Analyst	Business Process Analyst
Seema Adia	Central Reservations Manager	Team Member
Faye Brookes Lewis	Community and Welfare Officer	Team Member
Ashley Cory	Systems Manager	Team Member
Alex Ingold	Undergraduate Admissions Manager	Team Member
Andy Kaufman	Student Systems Manager	Team Member
Bryan Pilkington	Deputy Graduate Admissions Manager	Team Member
Davinder Ratra	Front of House Manager	Team Member
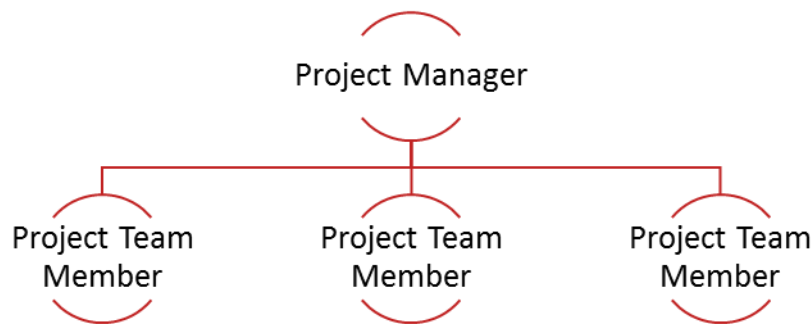
10 PROJECT COMMUNICATION

A detailed communications plan will form part of the Stage 2 process work. The draft communications plan will be presented to the Project Board for sign off.

In the interim, project communications will be in the form of project highlight reports, Project Board meetings and regular update emails to stakeholders.

11 RAIDs

These are the currently identified project level Risks (R), Assumptions (A), Issues (I) and Dependencies (D).

11.1 Risks

As part of the Stage 1 development process a risk assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the risks associated with the project. The table below details the high level primary risks these will be managed by the Project team on an ongoing basis and reported on throughout the project.

Identified Risks and Costs From Risk Register		
Cause of Risk	**Risk Control Measures**	**Owner**
Resource availability within in the Residences team will be reduced during key application and arrival dates throughout the year which could impact progress.	Conduct project planning around these constraints	Hannah Kearns
Moving from an existing solution that has been in place for some time, together with related integrations could have unexpected complexities.	In-depth scoping by Business Analysts with continued monitoring of risks and issues	Project Board

Identified Risks and Costs From Risk Register		
Cause of Risk	**Risk Control Measures**	**Owner**
The project may not meet the requested go-live window of October 2019 - January 2020.	Continued communication of project progress, risks and issues to the Project Board	Hannah Kearns
Project resourcing may be affected by ongoing LSE GDPR and Financial System projects.	Try to ringfence staff resources on the project, particularly in Finance	Project Board
Rezlynx Property Management System project is still currently running, and could impact this project.	Open until the PMS project is closed	Project Board
Changes to the project framework and organisational structure within IMT and the BIU could create delays to delivery.	BIU/IMT to work closely to quickly and effectively roll out any changes required	Jamie Moss
Suppliers may only be interested in providing us with a property management system	Procurement strategy will be developed	Project Board
Integration with Rezlynx could be affected by any changes to Rezlynx	Working relationship to be developed between Guestline and SAS supplier	Project Board
Potential lack of stakeholder engagement	Stakeholder communications plan will be developed	Jamie Moss

11.2 Assumptions

As part of the Stage 1 development process a number of assumptions have been identified. These assumptions will be tested in Stage 2, but if they remain they will be treated as risks and added to the Risk log. The table below lists the currently identifies assumptions.

Project Assumptions			
Assumption	**Impact if not realised**	**Action to confirm assumption**	**Owner and Timeline**
None			

11.3 Issues

The following issues have arisen during the Stage 1 development process and have not yet been resolved. These issues will be carried forward into Stage 2 for resolution. Issues will also be managed by the Project team on an ongoing basis and reported on throughout the project.

Project Issues			
Issues	**Impact of Issue**	**Action to resolve**	**Owner and Timeline**
None			

11.4 Dependencies

As part of the Stage 1 development process a number of dependencies have been identified. These dependencies will be tested in Stage 2, but if they remain they will be treated as risks and added to the Risk log. The table below lists the currently identifies dependencies.

Project Issues			
Dependencies	**Impact if not managed**	**Action to resolve**	**Owner**
Finance One project	Finance One will manage all accommodation-related financial transactions, and will need to be integrated with the Student Accommodation System. The project is currently scheduled to complete by Summer 2019 but if this is delayed it could prevent the implementation of a working payment system for the SAS project.	Project Managers on both projects will be in regular communication. John Harris will be the Board-level link between both projects as he is Senior Supplier for both.	Project Board

Incremental Project
Framework.pptx

SAS Project
Roles.docx

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Incremental Project Framework

(see above)

Appendix 2 – Project Roles

(see above)