

PROCESS VALIDATION REPORT

Student Accommodation System Project

Project No: RS181318

DATE: 31/07/2019

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Document Control	
Version:	1.0
Date Published:	31 st July 2019
Owner:	Alix Cork

Revision and Approval Control

Revision	Date	Issued by	Approved by	Approval Date	Comments
V0.1	25.07.19	Alix Cork			Initial draft
V1.0	31.07.19	Alix Cork			Incorporated comments from Hannah Kearns. Appendices removed into separate documents.

Distribution Control

Version	Issued by	Distribution
V0.1	Alix Cork	Project Team
V1.0	Alix Cork	LSE Community

Validation Report Sign Off

Name	Role	Date Signed Off
Hannah Kearns	Business Change Manager	31.07.19

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the ideal ‘to be’ process model developed between September 2018 and March 2019 for the Student Accommodation System Project along with the operational, systems and policy changes required to deliver it.

The ‘to-be’ process model was developed over a series of design workshops by a process team consisting of functional experts from across the School. A series of validation workshops were then held, enabling further stakeholders from across the School to discuss the proposed process model and provide feedback to the project team.

The proposed process changes, and subsequent recommendations made to support their implementation, are considered fundamental to the success of the project. The approval of these proposed changes and recommendations from the Student Accommodation System Project Board will enable the project to progress to the next stage to finalise the system solution design and the implementation strategy: what will be delivered, when and how.

This report details the full outputs of the process design and validation workshops, including comprehensive change requirements and recommendations. A brief summary of the changes for each of the key stakeholder groups is provided below.

1.1 Summary of recommended changes for key stakeholder groups

Offer holders / Students:

- Ability to use book LSE accommodation using a self service system
- Ability to accommodation availability in real time
- Ability to filter searches for accommodation by various preferences
- Single sign on - User profile in the system is pre-populated with information submitted at application

Residential Services Staff:

- No longer having to manually process accommodation applications
- Ability to devote more resources towards offer holders / students requiring specialist support
- Documents held centrally within the system as opposed to being emailed, with appropriate role based access
- Enhanced management reporting
- Enhanced potential for upsell / resell of rooms

These proposed changes together with the recommendations on page 31 are presented for approval by the Student Accommodation System Project Board.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

LSE aims to improve the student experience by providing students with a self-service accommodation booking system. This will enable students to instantly book LSE accommodation without waiting for room requests to be manually processed, and will also reduce the time spent by administrative staff servicing these manual processes.

The Student Accommodation System (SAS) project has been set up to implement a self-service solution for students which will provide a user experience that meets student expectations of online booking systems.

2.1 Project Objectives

- A 'self-service' application system where a student can select and reserve their room type and price bracket at the time of online application, eliminating or reducing processing times.
- An application that is integrated with the School's webpages such that research on halls and availability can take place within the application (rather than requiring separate searches on multiple browsers).
- An accommodation application system which facilitates payments and has 2 way integration with RCSD's property management system (Rezlynx), and also integrates with SITS (School's student record database).
- System with appropriate management reporting capabilities.

Achieving these objectives will enable Residential Services to deliver benefits to operational staff and students, including but not limited to:

- Self-service application will **remove the commitment to 28 days processing service level**, which is difficult to attain at busy times of the year.
- Self-service application will bring **student experience** in line with current UX norms for booking platforms
- **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). This reduces room for error when offering rooms.
- **Improved management reporting** will allow KPIs to be measured more reliably and quickly.
- Self-service will **allow voids to be filled more quickly**.
- Removing manual processes will enable Residential Services staff to focus on providing **value-added activities** (such as providing specialist support for non-routine bookings)

2.2 Stage Gate Methodology

The project is being delivered via LSE's Stage Gate Methodology, which ensures the project is business-led and is made up of five stages. The project is currently in Stage 2 (Solution Definition) which includes process design, requirements gathering, procurement and organisational design. The project is scheduled to move to Stage 3 (Solution Delivery) in November 2019. Stage 3 includes implementation of new systems including development, configuration, data migration and integration where required, testing and training.

The project team has decided to take a phased approach to delivery. Phase 1 will consist of essential functionality to ensure that we have a minimum viable product which will deliver many of the project's benefits as soon as possible. Phase 2 is expected to deliver additional functionality that will enhance the student and administrative experience and will be rolled out at a later date.

3.0 PROJECT WORKSHOPS

The core project team has actively engaged with the School community, and will continue to do so for the duration of the project. The following workshops have taken place to date:

3.1 Kick-off meeting / Level 3 process map workshop

A Level 3 process map representing the high level LSE Student Accommodation System process was developed in September 2018 from an initial process review carried out with project team members from Residential Services. A combined kick-off and Level 3 process mapping workshop was held in August 2018 to bring together a group of key individuals from across the School. Input gained from the wider process team at this workshop was used to further refine the Level 3 process map.

A high level version of the Level 3 process map can be found on page 8. The full Level 3 process map detailing roles and system functionality can be found in **Appendix C**.

3.2 Level 4 process workshops

A number of colleagues whose work would be impacted by the project, or who had subject matter expertise in the processes being re-designed, were invited to be part of the wider process team. This project team took part in a series of process workshops running from September 2018 to February 2019 in order to design ideal, 'to be' processes for the Student Accommodation System. Level 4 swim lane diagrams were then produced for the areas identified as being in scope of the project. This process work including the workshops was facilitated by Alix Cork (Business Process Analyst).

Following the process workshops a Change Matrix was produced to record all the required changes to current Residences processes (see **Appendix A**). Each change was then categorised according to whether it related to policy, organisation, technical or information; several of the larger changes span two or more of these categories.

3.3 Validation workshops

The validation workshops provided an opportunity to share and review the process change ideas with the wider School community. 2 workshops took place in April 2019 and were co-facilitated by members of the wider process team.

A key feature of these workshops was the presentation of a user journey storyboards by members of the wider process team. The storyboards helped demonstrate how the newly designed processes might work in the future and was a way of bringing together the stakeholders, process flows and system functionality that will be required. See **Appendix B** for the storyboard slides.

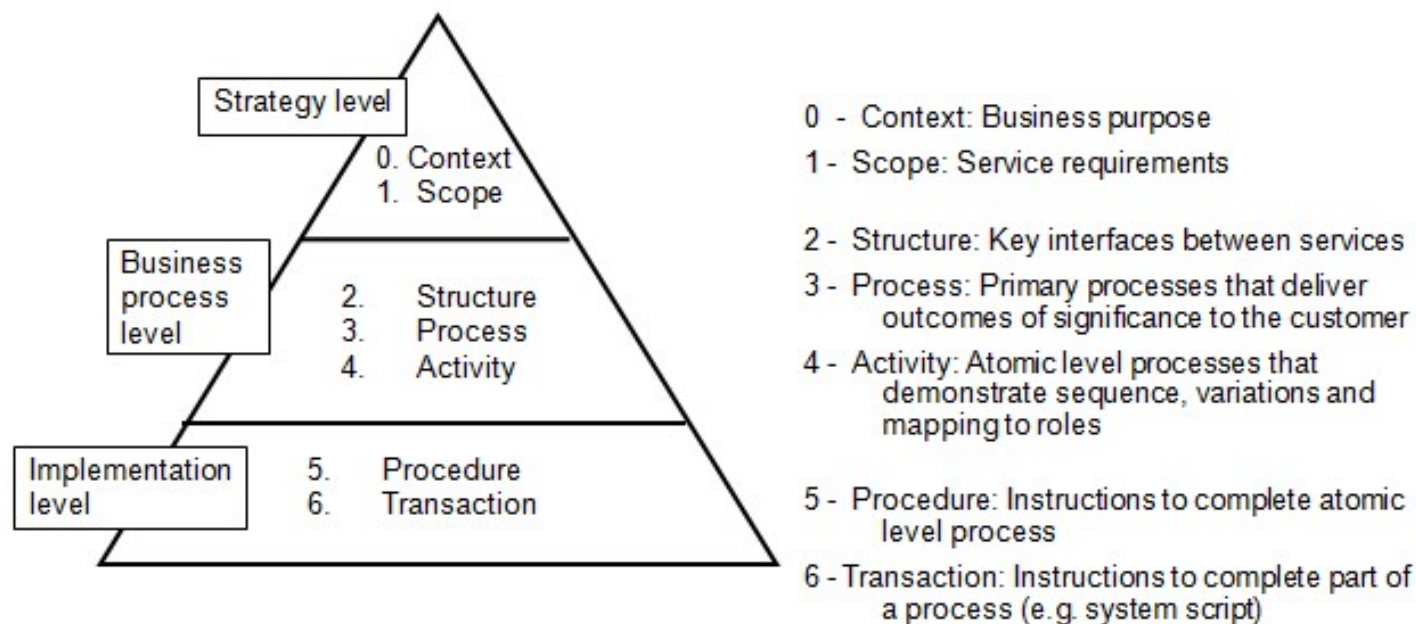
During the validation workshops participants had the opportunity to:

- Explore best practice ideas with colleagues from different parts of the school to help shape and validate changes to the student accommodation booking process
- Understand the proposed changes and their potential benefits for staff and students at LSE
- Review and challenge the potential extent of pastoral and welfare case management within the accommodation system
- Ensure their department and team was represented

The outcome of this consultation is documented in this report and, following approval of the Student Accommodation System Project Board, will feed into the development of the solution and implementation strategy.

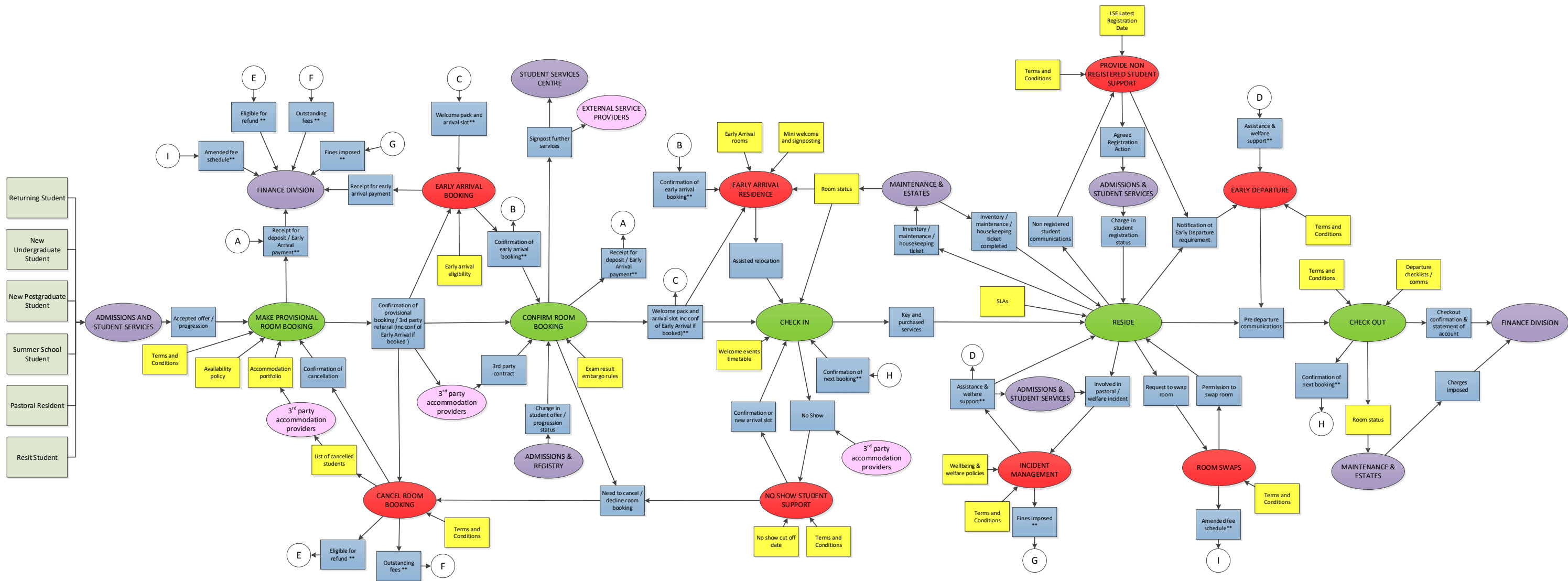
4.0 PROCESS LEVELS

The development and design of the ideal 'to be' process for the Student Accommodation System uses a modelling technique based on different levels. The first step is to identify the primary processes and services and record them as part of a high level process diagram also known as the Level 3. From this Level 3 process map more detailed diagrams known as Level 4 swimlane diagrams are designed. The diagram below explains the different levels.



5.0 LEVEL 3 PROCESS DIAGRAM FOR THE STUDENT ACCOMMODATION SYSTEM

This high-level diagram represents the processes in scope of the Student Accommodation System project.



Key

Green oval	A main process that the majority of students will go through
Red oval	A support process that some students will pass through
Purple oval	A dependent process that is part of the main process
Blue rectangle	An input/output of the processes
Yellow rectangle	A control that allows the process to be delivered consistently

5.1 Level 3 Principles

The Level 3 process diagram was designed with the following principles in mind:

- The Level 3 diagram is designed for the majority of students and how their journey through the accommodation lifecycle (from booking to check out) would look like in an ideal world
- Core services which all students will encounter are known as the 'runner' processes and are represented as green ovals
- There are some services that only a minority of students will require, these are known as the 'repeater' processes and are represented as red ovals. The main examples of these in the Level 3 diagram are those relating to cancellations and pastoral / welfare issues as not all students will require assistance in these areas.
- Other processes that occur very rarely are known as 'stranger' processes and are not represented on the Level 3. These are exceptions to the main runner and repeater processes. A key concept in these circumstances is that of continuous improvement; if something occurs that is not part of the standard process those involved reflect on whether it is likely to come about again, if it is, then the process is updated to accommodate it
- The Level 3 represents a typical user journey; at each service touch point the user enters an input and receives an output, these are represented by blue rectangles
- The Level 3 includes the identification of 'controls', these are the business rules, policies, regulations and key sources of information that enable the services to work effectively and consistently, they are represented by yellow rectangles
- Finally any dependent processes or services are represented by purple ovals and help to define the scope of the project

A more detailed Level 3 map also includes the identification of 'enablers', these are generic labels for system functionality and a set of skills required to run the service represented by peach squares and green circles. This can be found in **Appendix C**.

6.0 LEVEL 4 SWIMLANE DIAGRAMS

6.1 Introduction

Each of the green and red processes identified on the Level 3 diagram were discussed at process workshops to design the next level of detail, depicted in Level 4 swimlane diagrams. These diagrams were designed with Lean principles in mind with a focus on streamlining all steps in the process and reducing non value-added activities known as waste with the aim to remove transactional tasks associated with current processes.

This project aims to procure a system or systems that will be able to deliver the processes as detailed in the process maps. Since the exact nature of the system(s) is not known at this stage, there may likely be variation between the processes as mapped by the project team, and the processes as they are set up in reality. The processes as mapped can withstand a degree of flexibility during configuration and implementation, provided the intended outcomes of the processes are preserved.

It should be noted that while this project aims to procure a new system or systems, the selected solution must integrate with several pre-existing systems. This may require change to the processes as mapped to ensure the system maps to the architecture of these pre-existing systems.

The move to a self-service system should remove a significant, time consuming and complex function from the Residences Team. This creates opportunity to add value through focusing the team's efforts on value added activities such as providing specialist support to students in need. It is anticipated that the first year of implementation will be needed to embed and adjust to the new system, with a full programme of continuous improvement being possible from the second year onwards. Benefits realisation activities therefore need to occur beyond the first year of implementation to get a true picture of the impact of the project.

The Level 4 swim lane diagrams designed by the process team together with the key changes and main benefits are presented as follows:

1. Provisional Booking
2. Confirm Room Booking
3. Check In
4. Reside
5. Check Out
6. Early Arrival Booking
7. Cancel Room Booking
8. Early Arrival Residence
9. Incident Management
10. Room Swap
11. Early Departure
12. Provide Non Registered Student Support
13. Provide No Show Student Support

Please see **Appendix D** for the completed swimlane diagrams.

6.2 Provisional Booking

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.2.1 Ideal process summary

This process is designed to accommodate all student types that are eligible to have accommodation in our halls of residences – including Undergrad, post grad, summer school and students attending pre-sessional courses. Applicants will need to have accepted an offer to study at LSE before they can use the accommodation portal to make an accommodation reservation.

Once applicants have accepted their offer to study, they can login to the accommodation system and start to browse the accommodation available. The system will be pre-populated with relevant information about them such as programme start date, UG / PG etc, so that the system only displays accommodation that is genuinely available to that student. The system will allow applicants to update any information relating to adjustments / adaptive rooms at this point, if this was not disclosed during the initial application process.

Applicants can then select which type of accommodation they want to book with us, and pay a deposit if necessary. The system will handle taking the deposits online. This will generate a confirmation to the applicant that they have a provisional booking of accommodation.

The booking will become a “confirmed” booking at a later stage, when the applicant holds an unconditional offer to study at LSE. Students will also be alerted to early arrival accommodation options available to them, which will also be booked and paid for via the system. For Summer School and Early Arrival packages, the full payment will be taken, and that booking will be fully confirmed at this stage.

6.2.2 Key changes

This process takes place online, and does not require intervention by residences.

Students can view up to date accommodation availability and make a provisional booking in real time.

The system will be prepopulated with student information to ensure students are shown appropriate options, including early arrivals.

6.2.3 Main benefits

Accommodation system shows each student the accommodation that suits their requirements, and is still available to book - no need to stipulate 1st, 2nd, 3rd choice

Students receive confirmation of their provisional booking in real time - no 28 day turn around time

No waitlist in operation - 1st come, 1st served booking process, triggered by the student accepting an offer to study at LSE

Disability & access requirements disclosed at any point in the admissions and accommodation process will be stored and shared between Admissions, DWS and Residences as appropriate - students not asked multiple times for the same information

Submit relevant documents (e.g. medical certificates) via the accommodation system

Early arrival packages to be available to all students - limited time frame and hall availability to enable better student experience

No manual processing of accommodation application forms

Enhanced integration with SITS to create better information sharing between divisions

Staff able to devote expertise to the applications that require additional support

6.3 Confirm Booking

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.3.1 Ideal process summary

After the students have received and been notified of their exam results, students who are no longer eligible to attend LSE will have their accommodation booking automatically cancelled.

Students who still have a deposit to pay will be requested to do so in the system before they are given final confirmation of their accommodation booking.

Postgraduate students whose offers remain conditional are given a 'probability rating' by the admissions team in SITS - this will be used to determine if we should progress their accommodation booking from provisional to confirmed.

Residences allocate students to specific rooms of the same room 'type' booked in the provisional booking, and students are asked to confirm the terms and conditions within a limited timeframe to secure the booking

A welcome pack of information will be available to students after they have accepted the terms and conditions – information about the halls, online induction etc

Welcome information for students to be presented in the portal for students to be able to return to

6.3.2 Key Changes

Welcome information for students to be presented in a portal for students to return to as they wish

As cancellations come in, the system will generate alerts to students who have signed up for them regarding late availability

Increased focus on pre arrival communications / information - increasing the variety of formats and types of information to increase engagement and meet student expectations

6.3.3 Main Benefits

Possibility to enhance the format and type of welcome information, e.g. videos from wardens etc

Auto cancellation of students who have not met the requirements, and who decline their offer to study

Reduction in manual allocation of students to rooms

6.4 Check In

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.4.1 Ideal process summary

The student is incentivised to complete their online induction by being able to book an arrival slot on completion

Students are asked to confirm their emergency contact information at this point - it may have changed since they made their application

Students who have early bookings will check in and out, receiving a 'mini' welcome experience at that point. The main welcome events and information will be provided to them at the same time as for other students

Welcome events scheduled for check in day to help orientate students to their local area. Welcome events for parents etc as well – to help students 'offload' their parents and make parents feel a part of the process

Use repeat welcome events (e.g. 'guided tour to local shops' every 30 minutes) to take account that students will be arriving throughout the day

Once students are checked in, this prompts the system to begin inventory communications. Maintenance and housekeeping requests resulting from this will be logged in the system for students to have record

6.4.2 Key changes

Bookable arrival slots - tailored feel to the arrival process

Giving / updating emergency contact details prior to arrival speeds

6.4.3 Main Benefits

Bookable check in slots help queue management which will make for a more pleasant student experience

Encouraging students to update their details prior to check in will speed the check in procedure

6.5 Reside

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.5.1 Ideal process summary

After successful check in, the system will begin sending automatic reminders to students to complete their inventory. This will be logged and held in the system, to be referenced at check out.

Routine, automatic updates will inform the system if there are any changes to student statuses that require action, e.g. Withdrawals, Interruptions, Non Registration. This will enable communications to be sent and action to be taken as appropriate.

Housekeeping and maintenance requests will be logged and tracked via the system.

6.5.2 Key changes

Using the system to proactively communicate with students regarding their registration status, automating where appropriate

Using the system to log housekeeping and maintenance requests makes the accommodation portal a 'one stop shop' for students and residences staff to manage their stay in accommodation

6.5.2 Main Benefits

The system will automate the resolution of routine start of year snags, i.e. registration reminders, inventory completion, reducing the burden on Residences staff at an extremely busy time of year

6.6 Check out

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.6.1 Ideal process summary

As check out day approaches, automatic communications are generated to students preparing them for check out. Students are asked to complete a form and verify the status of their room against the inventory.

Front of House staff coordinate moving out logistics, e.g. organising areas for students to leave items for charity, etc. Front of house staff will check students out, making sure they have completed all their forms online.

The student departs.

Cleaning and maintenance activities happen as normal - if any major faults are identified, charges will be issued to the students by being logged in the system and managed in 1 Finance.

As part of the pre-departure communications, we will promote things like vacation-time and future year bookings.

6.6.2 Key changes

Enhanced / more regular reminders generated from the system to prepare for departure

Communications and departure details held in one system

6.6.3 Main Benefits

Portal continues to be 'one stop shop' for students to prepare for check out, view the status of their accommodation, and be notified of any further actions that is taken after check out.

6.7 Early Arrival Booking

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.7.1 Ideal process summary

This process relates to students who wish to arrive early for their own reasons, and to students who need to arrive early to attend pre-sessional teaching. The booking can be made in conjunction with a provisional booking, in conjunction with confirming a room booking, or as an independent transaction any time before check in (subject to availability).

Options for students to book extra nights of accommodation prior to their contracted check in date will be displayed in the system as one of the options available. The number of nights and accommodation type will be tailored to the student type, i.e. students with pre-sessional teaching will be shown options appropriate to their pre-sessional registration date.

6.7.2 Key changes

Proactive signposting of early arrival options throughout the lead up to check in day, with the system being able to determine which options are available to a particular student.

6.7.3 Main Benefits

Promoting early arrival options alongside regular bookings allows the student to make the booking in one transaction

Linking the options available to the student type will ensure students are selecting the correct dates

Early arrival bookings are automated and do not require manual processing by Residences staff.

6.8 Cancel Room Booking

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.8.1 Ideal process summary

Students who have not met the requirements to take up their offer of study at LSE are automatically cancelled by the system, at the appropriate time. The system will update the room stock availability accordingly.

Students who elect to cancel their room booking before check in are automatically processed where possible (dependent on Terms and Conditions), with the system updating room stock availability accordingly.

Students who have cancelled their booking are eligible to use the system to make another booking.

6.8.2 Key changes

The system will require students to officially notify LSE of a change in offer status if they wish to cancel for offer related reasons

The system will tailor the cancellation advice depending on student booking type and time of year

6.8.3 Main Benefits

Removal of manual processing of cancellations by Residences staff wherever possible.

Students have the flexibility to cancel and re-book in real time, giving them greater flexibility in managing their own booking.

6.9 Early Arrival Residence

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.9.1 Ideal process summary

Students receive scaled down version of regular check in and check out for early arrival residence. This is not intended to replicate the full scale check in events that happen at the normal start of year.

Residences use the system to provide instructional communications to students who have been allocated to a different room as their term time booking.

6.9.2 Key changes

Early arrival period to be limited to max 1 week prior to normal check in date.

6.9.3 Main Benefits

Residences staff will be able to provide a more coherent check in experience if it is limited to within a 1 week window.

The risk of student isolation is reduced if early arrivals are managed within a 1 week period.

6.10 Incident Management

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.10.1 Ideal process summary

This process relates to students who are involved in an incident that requires some logistical and/ or pastoral support from residences. This also includes students who have been the cause on an incident.

A student may present to DWS with an issue that impacts their residential requirements, in which case DWS will refer the incident to the relevant Warden

The student may also present to Front of House / Pastoral residents to report an issue or concern

The warden will discuss the incident with the student and take immediate action as required, before logging the case in the system

If required, follow up disciplinary meetings may be held with students, which may then incur a fine

The warden will keep and update records relating to the incident in the system

The student will receive follow up communication – this may be as simple as saying the case is closed, or include further wellbeing information

We can also send communications to groups of students as appropriate (“to all students on the 3rd floor, please be vigilant as there has been a theft”)

6.10.2 Key changes

Communications regarding incidents are sent and recorded in the accommodation portal

6.10.3 Main Benefits

Communications and actions relating to incidents are held in one place, making the system a one stop shop for students and staff to be able to view information relating to their stay in accommodation.

6.11 Room Swap

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.11.1 Ideal process summary

A student wishing to swap rooms uses a forum within the system to display their room information and details of when they wish to swap

The student is then able to view information about other students who wish to swap, and find a suitable room swap candidate

Both students involved complete an online form in the system to submit their request to swap rooms

If a swap is not logistically permitted (e.g. a PG is requesting to swap into a UG hall) then the system will prevent them from doing so

Wardens and Front of House will also review the room swap forms to check for potential pastoral issues ("I want to swap because I don't get on with my room mate) and logistical details

Students will receive an update to their contract as appropriate, to take into account of the any changes to the cost / contract duration etc

The students then swap rooms as agreed

6.11.2 Key changes

Students can search for room swap candidates in a forum as opposed to using facebook, word of mouth etc

Students receive an official amendment to the contract

Generating and logging changes to the contract in the system, to avoid misunderstandings / challenges down the line

6.11.3 Main Benefits

To assist students in finding suitable room swap candidates and reduce the element of 'luck' in being able to find one.

To ensure students have the correct room information provided in a standardised format

To reduce manual processing of room swap requests that are not permitted.

6.12 Early Departure

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.12.1 Ideal process summary

This process relates to students who need to check out of their accommodation before their originally contracted check out date

Students will complete a leaver form that will display different information depending on the student type (e.g. different questions will be asked if the student has withdrawn from studies, as opposed to simply deciding to leave their accommodation)

Wardens will review the early leaver forms to check whether there are any pastoral issues that need to be addressed relating to the reasons for early departure

Front of House staff will review the early leaver forms to check that the proposed check out date is logistically feasible

The student will check out of the accommodation

If it is possible to resell the room, there may be a refund due to the student after they have departed. Their contract will be updated in the system, and 1 Finance will handle any reimbursements required

6.12.2 Key changes

Student registration status (withdrawn, interruption) will be fed into the system, automatically triggering early departure communication to the student

The system will automatically generate check out date reminders to students to make clear the room must be vacated

The system will automatically generate room re-sell updates for students to keep them informed of progress

6.12.3 Main Benefits

Using the trigger from SITS to start early departure communications means we are able to begin early departure preparations and resell sooner.

Automating reminders for check out dates will help students plan for their departure.

6.13 Provide Non Registered Student Support

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.13.1 Ideal process summary

This process relates to students who have successfully checked into their accommodation, but have not officially registered as a student at LSE by their scheduled registration date

The system will be updated with the student's registration status from SITS

Residences will review the list of non registered students and inform Student Services / academic departments as necessary

Residences will send communication to non registered students via the system advising them to register and highlighting the terms of the contract

The dialogue will continue with the student until either the student becomes registered, or the individual leaves the accommodation

6.13.2 Key changes

Using the system to proactively communicate with students regarding their registration status, automating where appropriate

6.13.3 Main Benefits

Communications and case management held in the system, making the accommodation portal a 'one stop shop' for students and residences staff to manage their stay in accommodation

Time savings for staff as communications and cancellations are triggered automatically

6.14 No Show Student Support

*This information should be read in conjunction with the corresponding level 4 swimlane diagram in **Appendix D**.*

6.14.1 Ideal process summary

This process relates to students who do not show up to check in to their accommodation at the expected check in date

After the check in process, the system will generate a report of students who did not show up to their accommodation

Residences will liaise with Student Services and academic departments to see if there is any information around why they might be late to arrive

Residences will send communication to no show students via the system requesting details of new intended check in time and highlighting the terms of the contract

The dialogue will continue with the student until we can either progress the student to check in, or the booking is cancelled

6.14.2 Key changes

Communications held in the system, so student can access details in one place

Students able to amend their expected arrival date in the system

6.14.3 Main Benefits

Communications and case management held in the system, making the accommodation portal a 'one stop shop' for students and residences staff to manage their stay in accommodation

Time savings for staff as communications and cancellations are triggered automatically

7 VALIDATION WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

7.1 Introduction

The changes identified in the Level 4 swim lane diagrams and captured in the change matrix were grouped into themes and developed into a set of questions that were posed at the validation workshops in order to consult with representatives from across the School to gather their feedback.

Validation workshop feedback was sought on 10 key areas which broadly align with the proposed Level 4 swimlane diagrams:

1. Making Initial Bookings for Accommodation
2. Confirming Bookings for Accommodation
3. Check In to Accommodation
4. Student Support – No Shows
5. Student Support – Non Registered Students
6. Student Support – Incident Management
7. Room Swaps
8. Check Out of Accommodation
9. Early Departure from Accommodation
10. Communications *(NB: this was not an area singled out for discussion within the workshops, however there were so many ideas and suggestions to do with communications that they are best housed in their own section in this report)*

These areas were posed as discussion topics designed to encourage discussion and debate - the material used at the workshops can be found in **Appendix E**.

In total 30 participants were in attendance over the course of 2 validation workshops.

The key discussion points during the workshops are summarised below.

1. Making Initial Bookings for Accommodation (including Early Arrival and Pre Sessional bookings)
<p>It was broadly agreed that:</p> <p>The proposal to group pre-sessional students together in terms of location will enhance the student experience overall.</p> <p>The proposal to restrict the timeframe for early arrivals will enhance the student experience overall.</p> <p>Additional Ideas:</p> <p>Should we consider charging admin fees for students who want to swap room before check in?</p> <p>Ideas to support the process:</p> <p>A room sharer forum, i.e. an online space for room sharers to chat and introduce themselves prior to check in, could help with student engagement – they would feel more in control of the process, rather than just ‘being told’.</p> <p>Staggered release of rooms might be required for late offer holders, especially Widening Participation students.</p> <p>Consider staggered room release / holding some rooms back</p> <p>Make arrangements with 3rd Party Accommodation Providers to ensure same type of information is sent at similar times as LSE residents</p>

Students with provisional bookings could sign up for alerts if a better room comes along, and transfer the deposit. I.e. an “upgrade room” option. This offers students flexibility.

Make sure information about other factors impacting halls is made available, e.g. if refurbishments are planned.

Better transparency of fees payable upfront

Parents may want to stay commercially during early arrivals period – options could be promoted to early arrival students

Could each hall have a block booking for early arrivals? So that students could be allocated to the same hall as their term time booking (as opposed to all being allocated to the same hall). *There was discussion around the pros and cons of this approach – it would spread early arrivers across halls and make it harder to give a coherent early arriver welcome, but it would avoid students having to relocate to another hall after just a few weeks / days*

Language school students need to be included in the early arrivals process.

Hall information and room search filters:

- We are competing against commercial room booking systems in terms of look & feel of the system
- There needs to be much better visual display of information – good and representative photos of different room types. Room for professionalising this info.
- Information relating to the local area is also useful, i.e. minutes’ walk to the nearest convenience store, time / price of travel to campus etc
- Cost transparency could help – e.g. where do the common room fees go? How much of my fees are spent on cleaning and maintenance?
- Videos getting to show the personality of the hall.
- Budgeting app? Cost of room, transport, food etc
- Cooking facilities, dietary requirements with room sharers (e.g. I don’t want to share with a meat eater)

Concerns raised:

When do students get their LSE identity? Which email address will they use to login (i.e. will their first login require the personal email address associated with their LSE application?) and when do they switch to their LSE address?

There is potential for international students to be disadvantaged due to receiving their exam results later than UK students. The students may not wish to make a provisional booking until they know their exam results.

Widening participation students may receive their offer later in the cycle, and are also the group likely to require the cheaper rooms, which sell out. Not securing accommodation may prevent them from attending.

Batch releasing rooms – do we want to do this to make it fairer for late offer holders, or do we accept ‘that’s life’? Remember the bakery principle – if there’s only one loaf left in the bakery, that is the one the customer wants and they are pleased it is available!

If we are moving to 1st come, 1st served system, who do we exempt from that and how? (e.g. batch release vs holding certain rooms for certain student types)

3rd party Accommodation Provider Lilian Knowles – there are issues around double application for students in this hall – these should be addressed.

Location considerations – if a student is behind a location specific firewall, how can we be sure they are receiving / can access any of our information?

We ****MUST HAVE**** PCIDSS compliant deposit payments

Fees for compulsory pre-sessional students should be aligned with term time fees – it’s unfair to impose extra costs. Equally for resit students over the summer, and LT exams. Business rules around this need to be defined.

2. Confirming Bookings for Accommodation (including cancellation of unsuccessful students)

Ideas to support the process:

“Confirmation of accommodation” document – this could do with a snappier title

The Admissions and Residences policies around students declining their offer after 31st July need to be made clearer and aligned for consistency.

Concerns raised:

On A-Level results day – the system will be slammed. We must be sure it won’t fall over.

The graduate admissions process is slower than UG and not consistent across departments. Students may be disadvantaged by virtue of LSE not processing paperwork and then be left with little choice.

There must be a status in SAS to know whether students are being remarked so they are not automatically cancelled, and so we can send appropriate communications

3. Check in to Accommodation

It was broadly agreed that:

This is a good opportunity to review and align the check in experience at LSE.

Ideas to support the process:

A representative from the Welcome team confirmed that limiting time periods for welcome events has worked well for them, as opposed to in the past where there was poor uptake of events that were spread over too large a time frame.

Create an equitable programme of welcome events across halls to include our diverse range of students. Standardised arrival day experience is KEY. Even if the standard in halls differs, the experience should not.

Hold a low – key reception for people to come and go

Create events for parents (‘parent drop off’) e.g. a Parents’ tea

Offer local area tours led by halls committee representatives

Activities can occur in the whole of the first week – they do not have to be crammed in to the check in weekend

Food vouchers for first day e.g. pizza vouchers, before occupants have had a chance to go shopping for food and utensils. It also works as a socialiser.

Repeat events throughout the day are essential – it can be a lonely day for students.

Late arrivals ‘mop up’ event to ensure latecomers don’t miss out

Warden sessions – walk around, laundry, restaurant, student volunteers, walk to campus

Autistic students – busy and loud areas can be problematic. Could we offer a ‘quiet check in’ area?

Streamline house rules across halls: how to check in guests

Front of House staff need to be able to use system for day to day charging, e.g. PAT testing, common room charges

Concerns raised:

There is variation in check in events depending on the hall which can give the impression some halls are for the ‘wealthy’ students. We should be offering the same level of experience across halls.

4. Student Support – No Shows

Ideas to support the process:

Provide a drop down menu for students to report late reasons (free text is not helpful for reporting purposes).

No Show report generated to departments & relevant stakeholders. If we're capturing this information, we should give the right people access to it.

5. Student Support – Non Registered Students

Concerns raised:

There is a pastoral element in determining what the issue is for the student and whether they need more support. The human element here is very important.

6. Student Support – Incident Management

Concerns raised:

What is the feedback mechanism for alerting academic departments of an incident in case a student uses it as a case for exceptional circumstances?

How do we flag non-resident incidents? (E.g. when a non resident student is involved in an incident in halls)?

Is this scope creep? There are information security concerns, which would require careful role based access controls. Would it be better to keep the two systems separate? There's no point having a bad pastoral care system in a good accommodation system. If all we need is financial & room information, a fit for purpose pastoral system could create a "stub" in new system.

7. Room Swaps

Ideas to support the process:

For shared rooms – give consideration to the occupant who is remaining in the room, and what communications they are sent. Could we swap details with the incoming student in advance?

Restrictions on what data is free text in room swap forms – room data needs to be prepopulated by the system so that we know students are receiving the correct information

8. Check Out

Ideas to support the process:

Provide cleaning items for students to prepare their rooms

Farewell events (can be a sort of anti climax) – focus on celebration

Provide item exchange / amnesty – leave behind your utensils for the next cohort

When gathering feedback, ask "What did you like about your stay in halls?"

Committee run events – bbq, photo, sweatshirt

Provide framework and best practice guidance to committees for holding check out events

Students with 31 week contracts should be encouraged early to book vacation accommodation as it sells out quickly

Concerns raised:

3rd Party Accommodation Provider Unite – there are known issues around inventory – run / managed by unite, but the contract is with LSE. This should be addressed.

Students who move around multiple times in the year – the inventory process will need to handle this so we can ensure rooms are ready for resell.

9. Early Departure

Ideas to support the process:

Early departure form could ask “would you consider moving to another hall?” as we may be able to assist students without them having to rent privately.

Concerns raised:

If a student notifies they will be departing a few days early, does this release their room for other bookings? Clear guidance to students is required around exactly what will happen.

10. Communications

Ideas to support the process:

Pre check in – create the feeling that you are moving somewhere specific, rather than a generic location.

- Tips on what to pack for the move day (will it be raining, etc).
- What will be provided vs what will not (kettle? Coathangers?)
- Room mate details
- When are staff and services available over check in weekend?
- Where is the nearest parking?
- Directions to / from nearest tube stations.
- Contact details for Front of House.
- What to expect at given times (12 noon will be very busy vs 8am there will be skeleton staff”.
- Local conditions on the day – road closures, tube lines etc.
- Living in UK info.
- Logistical – don’t use carrier bags.
- Student accommodation handbook provided in advance of arrival
- Where are the green spaces? Where is the ATM?
- “What’s going to happen to me on check in day?” – reduce culture shock & anxiety of different socio economics backgrounds
- Early arrivers – make sure they know what to expect, i.e. the halls will be full of non student guests.
- Highlight faith groups, societies etc- start getting students to think ahead to living here

Log communications on the portal so late arrivers can catch up on what they missed.

Bespoke the information for engagement and creating a sense of belonging

Conduct focus groups with students re: format of communications. Don’t just use 1 platform!

Engage students in content creation

MOBILE APP PLEASE! – showing tailored welcome day event info, push notifications for mail

Visual impairments – consider accessibility of app & info on the app (portal)

Weekly communications – sense of “preparing for arrival”

SMS notifications on the day before / day of (“your check in slot is xxx. Going to be late? Click here”). These may not be essential in terms of the message, but remind students we are looking forward to their arrival.

Tie in with school communications – we could make more use of student hub – more dynamic information on the halls page. Close coordination with Welcome communications.

Consider formats – held in system as well as mailed directly. On the day info sent via text in case of connectivity issues.

Videos with subtitles

Bigger but less frequent emails suggested

Distinguish “hard” and “soft” communications – official things via direct mail, softer info use student hub etc

Focus on the welfare aspect in final departure communications – “we hope you got home safe” etc

Hashtags for check in and check out for students to engage on the socials

SAS should assist in creating email lists, e.g. “wardens in bankside”

Halls committees could be given permission to use the portal to send emails to their own students.

Concerns raised:

What is the interplay between this system and Student Hub? We don’t want to create a disjointed experience.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are considered necessary for the successful implementation of a Student Accommodation System. The project team has worked on the basis that some changes are essential to launch a 'minimum viable product' (MVP) and some are necessary at later phases of the project to further embed the proposed process design.

These recommendations have been formed as a result of process design work and feedback from validation workshops.

- 1. Proceed to procurement** of a Student Accommodation System that will, as far as is practicable, enable LSE to deliver services to Offer Holders and Students as detailed in the Level 4 Process Swimlane Diagrams
- 2. Implement changes as detailed in the change requirements matrix**
- 3. Process and Policy Review**

It is recommended that a number of working groups are created to review and agree processes and policies where the impact spans across departments and divisions. This is necessary to ensure a coherent student experience, and to minimise potential disruption during the 'go live' phase.

2.1 Allocation Review

A working group comprised of Residences, DWS, Admissions (UG and PG), and Widening Participation should be established to agree:

- a) All student groups who should be exempted from the 1st come, 1st served principle of the accommodation booking process
- b) The method by which LSE will assist these students, e.g. by later batch release of rooms, holding back certain blocks of rooms, providing certain students with access codes, etc
- c) Which LSE policies need to be updated to reflect decisions made
- d) How this information will be made available to applicants / students so they understand the process

2.2 Cause for Concern Review

A working group comprised of Residences, DWS, Student Services and Academic Department Managers to review and agree:

- a) The protocol for Residences to alert other areas of the school of factors that may impact student wellbeing (no show, non registration, disability / mental health disclosure, incidents in halls)
- b) What data is necessary and appropriate to share (who needs to know, and how do we tell them)
- c) How to roll out information regarding agreed procedures to appropriate PSS
- d) How to inform students about how we share data across the school in line with GDPR

2.3 Cancellation Review

A working group comprised of Residences, Admissions and Student Services to review and agree:

- a) Policies relating to changes in student status which would result in the student no longer being eligible for accommodation as they once were, i.e. interruption, withdrawal, or changing from offer accepted to offer declined. This review to pay specific attention to exceptional circumstances, timelines and liability periods, to ensure they are aligned
- b) Timeframes for processing changes to registration status in SITS
- c) The protocol for information to flow from Residences to Admissions / Student Services where a student has notified they intend to change their status but have not officially done so

Residences – Admissions – Academic Departments policy and procedure review

4. Check in events review

Establish a focus group to create a template timetable of refreshed check in, welcome and departure events for students to create an equitable offering across halls, ensuring Residences are able to leverage opportunities arising from the implementation of a new system

5. Communications Review

To consider and include suggestions made during the validation workshops relating to communications in the Communications Review which is currently underway

6. 3rd Party Provider student experience alignment review

To work with 3rd party accommodation providers to identify any opportunities to align practices, especially in terms of communications

7. Form a UX and UI focus group to inform the configuration of the new Student Accommodation System.

A large part of the success of this project lies with how easily students and staff are able to use the system – users expect systems that ‘just work’. Forming a focus group to explore ideas around good design and useability, and having a clear picture in mind of what we are aiming for will help to direct the configuration work in Phase 3.