

LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

# Achieving Customer Service Excellence A Case Study

Leeds Metropolitan University has become the third and the largest UK University to achieve the Government's Customer Service Excellence Standard.



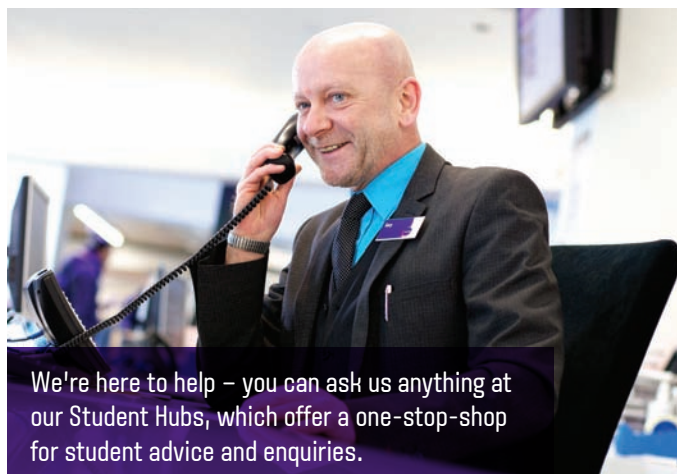
## Leeds Metropolitan University

Based in the thriving city of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University is one of the most popular universities in the country. The University has over 27,000 students and around 2800 staff and makes a significant contribution to the social, economic and cultural achievements of the city, region and beyond. It is committed to making real improvements to people's lives with a long and proud history of raising aspirations and achievement. The University has exceptional facilities, which the Assessor felt were inspirational and conducive to effective learning for the students.

The University's Library has held the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard and its predecessor the Charter Mark since 2001. In May 2013 the University was delighted to achieve the Customer Service Excellence Standard across the whole organisation.

## The Customer Service Excellence Standard

The Government developed the Customer Service Excellence Standard® to offer a practical tool for driving customer-focused change within the organisation. The Standard tests in great depth those areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude.



We're here to help – you can ask us anything at our Student Hubs, which offer a one-stop-shop for student advice and enquiries.



## Introduction

Leeds Metropolitan University's commitment to achieving the CSE Standard by 2015 was set out in its Strategic Plan 2010-2015. The University identified that the Standard could help promote and embed a customer-focused culture, which was essential to both thrive in an increasingly competitive environment and to continue to deliver a high quality service to its students, staff and other customers. The University chose to appoint the Centre for Assessment as its official assessment agency. Centre for Assessment provided the University with great support and feedback throughout the process.

## The Result

In May 2013 Leeds Metropolitan University was delighted to become the third, and the largest university in the UK to meet the standard, achieving a very positive assessment result, including nine areas of compliance plus. The Assessor also identified fourteen areas of strength, including:

1. Corporate Commitment, including leadership
2. Library facilities
3. Safeguarding of students
4. Consultation & improvement
5. Neighbourhood helpline
6. Practice learning & employability
7. Values
8. Standards
9. Strong focus on improvements
10. Premises
11. Information and access
12. Learning & development
13. Pre-change consultation
14. Customer satisfaction monitoring

*"Putting students at the heart of all we do and recognising their expectations as customers, as well as learners is helping us to respond to changes in a competitive market and to drive a shift in culture."*

Professor Susan Price, Vice Chancellor

*"Senior management had resourcefully used the Customer Service Excellence Standard as a structured framework on which to support and promote an unremitting augmentation of what they deliver as a university."*

Mick Lynch, Assessor

## The Journey

Leeds Metropolitan University has always been committed to providing high-quality services to its students, staff and other stakeholders. Much of the evidence submitted as part of the assessment related to the services that the University provides on a day to day basis. The journey was more than just achieving accreditation – it was used to apply the Customer Service Excellence framework to review and improve practices across the organisation to help consistently deliver an excellent experience to all their customers. Their approach involved:

1. Researching into existing best practice within and outwith the HE sector.
2. Setting up a CSE project framework including identifying a Project Sponsor and establishing a Project Board and Project Team
3. Engaging staff across the University through workshops and training
4. Identifying who their customers were
5. Undertaking a 'gap analysis' to evaluate strengths and areas for improvement
6. Developing a Customer Service Statement
7. Developing 'What's your view?' a central scheme for comments, compliments and concerns
8. Arranging mystery visiting
9. Implementing process reviews and projects to improve services.

The assessment process involved undertaking a pre-assessment visit and then preparing a written evidence submission. The Assessor made three onsite assessment visits where he met with staff, students and other stakeholders.



We're proud of our unique taxi initiative, in partnership with Amber Cars, which means students without ready money can still hire a taxi using their student card.



Our students rate our libraries highly: they are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

## The Future

Leeds Metropolitan University is committed to continuous improvement and maintaining the Customer Service Excellence Standard and is preparing for its first surveillance visit in 2014. This includes work to address the development points the Assessor identified to help the University pursue its commitment to continuous improvement.

## More information

Leeds Metropolitan University would be delighted to share their CSE experience with other organisations committed to providing customers with an excellent experience, including those interested in undertaking the Customer Service Excellence Standard. Please contact them via email: [cse@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:cse@leedsmet.ac.uk) or call 0113 812 3781.

*"Strong values underpinned the overall commitment to supporting the students and these certainly affected the way that people worked at the university, thus having a significant effect on the delivery of services across the organisation."*

Mick Lynch, Assessor