GOLD FOR E&F!

In October 2015, Estates & Facilities (E&F) achieved the Investors in People (IiP) Gold standard award – a great result for all of us at E&F!

Maria Swan thanks everyone who attended interviews, and allowed the assessors to observe meetings, one-to-ones and a toolbox talk.

What was very pleasing was that for most colleagues, the staff experience here within E&F is very positive and motivating.

The report highlighted some areas for development and these will be explored over the coming months. E&F achieved 174 evidence requirements (against the full 196 for the core standard). We also met an additional 147 evidence requirements and all together this allowed E&F to achieve the IiP Gold standard.

Highlights from the final report

‘Almost without exception people spoke very positively about the supportive leadership they receive at every level.

We found the involvement from all levels of management in supporting the learning and development of staff to be an outstanding feature of this organisation ...

The investment in staff learning and development is on-going and the wide-ranging provision is another outstanding feature within E&F ...

There is no doubt that people matter within this organisation. People consider E&F to be ‘not just an employer’. The level of passion, commitment and engagement would be the envy of many organisations. People genuinely enjoy coming to work and want to do a great job. The notion of “one team” is emerging and this is being supported by more opportunities for sharing and team-working across the organisation.’

The assessors ended by thanking ‘everyone involved in this assessment for engaging with both IIP practitioners in such an honest and open manner; and for the welcome and support ... on site both at Whiteknights and Greenlands, Henley.’

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION FOR E&F TEAMS

Colin on our IiP Gold standard accreditation page 3

Julie Frost and Matthew White interviewed by Sky News page 6
The 11th Green Gown Awards were held on 26 November 2015. The event saw over 320 sustainability leaders gather in Bristol to celebrate sustainability excellence within tertiary education.

The University was proud to receive a Highly Commended award in the Continuous Improvement: Institutional Change category. This recognised the success we have had in improving environmental performance at the University across energy, waste and travel.

The judges felt that the University was at the leading edge in terms of estates and operations, and commended the University’s ambitions and its substantial financial and carbon savings achievements.

They particularly endorsed the application of sustainability in the terms and conditions for all employees.

Since 2008, the University has delivered a 26 per cent cut in its carbon emissions; reduced waste production by a third; and has almost completely eradicated waste sent to landfill. Since 2011, the University has increased passenger numbers on buses to and from Whiteknights by 20 per cent each year. Together this work has saved £9.9 million and 32,155 in total carbon dioxide.

During 2014–15, the University achieved certification under both ISO14001 (environmental management) and ISO50001 (energy management).

Our initiatives have helped the University of Reading to:

- reduce carbon emissions by 26%
- almost eradicate landfill waste
- increase passenger numbers on buses to and from Whiteknights by 20% each year
- save £9.9 million
- save 32,155 in total carbon dioxide.
A deeply satisfying moment – not just because it makes you feel good when someone appreciates all the hard work you put in, or tells you that you are great (although that is quite pleasant!) – but because we are going through yet another period of great uncertainty and change across the University.

At a time when it would be all too easy to take our eye off the ball – and be distracted by the many pressures being brought about by E&E (Efficiency & Effectiveness) and PAS (Professional & Administrative Services) reviews – at E&F we have been able to demonstrate that our standards are just as high as ever… and are actually getting better. That is something of which we can all be justly proud!

But we are not complacent. We will continue to seek improvements wherever possible, helping the University in its mission to attain a global reputation for excellence, and to remain a place where students and staff alike can enjoy studying and working in a great environment and a wonderful setting.

I am sure E&F will continue to make a significant contribution to University life throughout 2016 and for many years to come. A very belated but heartfelt Happy New Year to you all!

Colin Robbins
Director of Estates & Facilities – Head of Function

HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

Thank you to all staff who took part in the E&F Safety Culture Survey last year. In total 203 questionnaires were returned by staff across all roles and areas of E&F.

The data has been well and truly crunched and reports issued to the management team. The data is available on the Sharepoint electronic document management system (EDMS). The summary report is online and should be open to all E&F staff.

Results

On the whole the survey results were reassuring, with over 90 per cent of staff reporting that they felt health and safety is taken seriously by both management and their peers in E&F.

Areas for improvement

The survey showed a small number of staff believe that accidents and risk-taking are a normal part of work. This requires further investigation to put these comments into context. However, as Colin pointed out during his ‘No Mushrooms’ talks, dangerous behaviour is never acceptable, and thankfully most people in E&F agree.

The survey highlighted some areas for improvement on incident reporting and investigation. Although 87 per cent of staff thought that accidents were always reported, the level was much lower for near misses. It is concerning that 35 per cent of manual, ancillary and trades staff felt that accident investigation was about apportioning blame, and this is certainly an area we will look into.

Staff across E&F recognised the value of safe procedures and risk assessment in doing jobs safely. However, almost a quarter of respondents thought that safety procedures could be improved upon. This does not necessarily mean that staff aren’t working safely: it could be that safe procedures aren’t being accurately recorded or described in risk assessments.

Next steps

Now that we have identified areas for improvement, we intend to run focus groups to help us fully understand the issues and challenges behind some of the data and staff comments. Together with E&F managers, we can then develop some practical plans for improvement over time.

CAMPUS SERVICES’ CLEAN SLATE

Campus Services had its ISO9001 (quality management) recertification in December. They passed with no new non-conformities, and all existing non-conformities were cleared off as completed, so they had a clean slate heading into 2016!
CHANGES AT CHANCELLOR’S WAY AND QUEEN’S DRIVE

At Whiteknights, Chancellor’s Way and Queen’s Drive have seen a flurry of activity in recent months: the demolition of the old Rural History Centre, and a new car park.

Old Rural History Centre site

Proposals to demolish the old Rural History Centre at Chancellor’s Way were on the table for several years. However, nothing definitive was decided until early 2015, at which point ecological surveys were conducted. The University, highly conscious of its environmental obligations concerning protected species, arranged the demolition programme around relocating any bats discovered roosting in the building. Fortunately, this did not prove as difficult as originally anticipated, and the physical demolition took place in a very short space of time (about two weeks, in fact).

The site will soon be used for new temporary accommodation to facilitate the URS project and the Henley Business School extension.

New Queen’s Drive car park

On the other side of the playing field, works progressed rapidly on the new car park at Queen’s Drive. The new car park was used for the winter graduation (about twelve weeks after works began).

From archaeological excavations and diverting a high-voltage cable, to re-using the top level of gravel for a Maintenance project elsewhere on campus (which saved approximately three hundred lorry journeys), the new car park now boasts three hundred spaces, and semi-porous tarmac to minimise flooding (one of the main problems of the old car park).

NEW PROPERTY SERVICES TEAM

The New Year saw the launch of the Property Services department (formerly Estates Management). The team is comprised of qualified chartered surveyors, architectural technologists, and corporate property and asset managers.

The team provides support for a wide range of activities including management of lettings concerning third-party companies and non-University organisations; leasehold and freehold negotiations; rent, service charge and utility cost collection; planning consent issues and policy monitoring; management, valuation and negotiation of council tax and business rates; and defence of University rights.

Property Services is also responsible for obtaining advice from estate and land agents, external surveyors, and associated property professionals.

For further information please contact Chris Reeve (ext. 8333) or Polly Tudball (ext. 7359), or visit the Property Services web page: www.reading.ac.uk/fmd/PropertyServices

POPULAR PALMER LECTURE THEATRE REFURBISHED

Once upon a time, lecturers would sprinkle gems of wisdom for students to fight over, while surveying everything from behind their ever-present wooden lectern. These days (in the age of Wi-Fi, flipped classrooms, and lecture capture) it would seem the age of the wooden lectern has finally come to an end.

To an extent, that is true. However, if you stood in the Palmer G10 lecture theatre during the summer of 2015 and witnessed its complete refurbishment, it would soon be apparent how important lectures still are, and how out of place a casual observer was! Arguably one of the most heavily used theatres on campus, Palmer G10 presented a nightmarish challenge to refurbish (in terms of planning and having enough time to actually do all the work). In the end the work was split over two summers, with asbestos removal taking place first.

Watching the main works – from standing on wooden boards thirty feet above the floor and seeing the ceiling being removed so that new lighting could be installed, to observing row upon row of new seating being painstakingly lined up and installed in the space of a week, and witnessing an impromptu light and sound show while the audio visual elements were tested – it was obvious the whole team had done an incredible job preparing and executing all aspects of the work. Work was finished ahead of schedule and under budget: a considerable achievement given the tight timeframe.

With four hundred new seats, a new screen, new timber panelling and acoustics, and of course a new lectern to control everything, Palmer G10 is now set up to serve the needs (present and future) of academics and students across the University.
PAVILION CLUB ROOM AT WHITEKNIGHTS

Are you looking for somewhere different for your next meeting? Why not book the new Whiteknights Pavilion club room?

The room can hold 20 seated, and has a kitchenette and a lovely view over our playing fields.

For more information about the new club room and how to book, please contact SportsPark reception: call 0118 378 8799 or email sport@reading.ac.uk

ECMWF has completed a lease to rent part of the second floor at the Enterprise Centre on the Whiteknights campus.

ECMWF had considered leasing space at various locations, including local business parks, but Property Services worked hard to help deliver the successful letting. Our Projects team has now been asked by ECMWF to apply their expertise to further help by managing the fit-out of the office suite for their new staff this spring. After the space is fitted out, ECMWF will bring a team of up to 65 people, including world-leading weather scientists, to be based at Whiteknights. This further enhances the University’s reputation as a world-leading cluster for meteorology and climatology expertise.

For further information please contact Chris Reeve (Property Services) on ext. 8333.

In October 2015, University Chancellor Sir John Madejski, and Steve Clarke (who was Reading Football Club Manager at the time) officially opened a stunning new sports pavilion at Bulmershe Court.

The Bulmershe Pavilion replaces the changing room facilities that were part of the University’s Bulmershe campus which closed in 2013. For more information about the Bulmershe Pavilion, please contact the SportsPark on 0118 378 8799 or email sport@reading.ac.uk

‘We were delighted that Steve and Sir John could join us for the opening of this wonderful new pavilion. Our aim is to always build facilities that we can be proud of now and in the future. The Pavilion not only demonstrates the University’s commitment to sport, but also to the community.’

Sir David Bell

Left to right: Steve Clarke (former Reading Football Club Manager), University Chancellor Sir John Madejski, Vice-Chancellor Sir David Bell, and Colin Robbins

Greg Goddard (Operations Manager, SportsPark) with Steve Clarke

ECMWF AT EARLEY GATE

Property Services, working with the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), have won a tender to provide accommodation for one of ECMWF’s key project teams.
On 2 November 2015, Martin Batt (Retail Catering Manager) and 11 other delegates flew to Bologna, Italy for an intensive five-day Advanced Barista Course.

The course was delivered by Peros in association with TUCO (The University Caterers Organisation). Here Martin Batt reports back on the course:

‘As manager of seven coffee shops at Reading, I was keen to see the coffee culture of Italy, and see how coffee was prepared, served and drunk in the Italian style. We quickly found that this was no place for milky coffees! Indeed, delegates quickly understood why the course was taking place in Italy, the home of espresso! They barely drink any milk. It’s frowned upon to drink a cappuccino beyond late morning, and if you ask for a latte you get a glass of cold milk.

As soon as we landed in Bologna our group was taken to Casalecchio di Reno (home to the La Spaziale headquarters). We toured the factory and learned about the history and origins of coffee.

The city was beautiful and all of us attendees dined like kings each night, but during the day we were put through our paces to learn advanced skills.

Using one-to-one and group training, the course covered detailed knowledge of the processes used to deliver espresso extraction, milk techniques, latte art, speed and efficiency, and coaching techniques.’
MENTORING AT E&F

Whether you’re a new member of staff or you’re well-established in your role, having a mentor to chat with can be a useful source of help and support.

A mentor can act as an advisor, counsellor or guide. All discussions are confidential. If you would like to become a mentor, or if you would like to have a mentor, please email Maria Swan: m.swan@reading.ac.uk

Here’s what Polly Tudball (pictured left) from Property Services had to say about being mentored:

‘Working with a member of staff outside of my department offered an excellent networking opportunity, and I learnt a lot about the University as an organisation and its culture.

My mentor was working in a similar role and thus was able to share valuable knowledge, particularly in regards to University protocols, procedures and key contacts. Our monthly meetings were an opportunity to reflect on what was working well and to ask for advice or further guidance in areas where I wasn’t so confident. I was able to put forward ideas as well as receive feedback; this created an open and positive working environment and increased my confidence in my role. I would highly recommend working with a mentor to any new members of staff.’

NEW PERMANENT VEHICLE ENTRY PERMITS

Campus Services are in the process of rolling out new permanent Vehicle Entry Permits (VEPs) for staff.

The new VEP is the size of a credit card. The cards are plastic so they are more durable than paper; this will make transfer between registered vehicles much easier. Campus Services are supplying plastic wallets so you can fit the VEP discreetly on your windscreen.

The new VEP cards are permanent; once the new permit is issued it will remain valid. This means there will no longer be an annual renewal process. Instead permit charges will be deducted automatically until you notify Campus Services that the permit is no longer required, or you’re no longer employed by the University. If you lose your permit, it will cost £10 to get a new one.

Please continue to update any changes to your vehicle’s details on the staff VEP web page; this is to ensure that Campus Services has up-to-date details for your vehicle.

Any vehicle not displaying a current permit will receive a parking warning or fine.

Whilst Campus Services are in the process of issuing the new permits, the 2015 permit will remain valid until the end of February 2016.

STAFF DISCOUNT FOR KIDS’ SPORTS CAMP

Kings Camps will be here during the Easter and summer holidays. They are a non-profit organisation that works internationally to get children active and enjoying sports while making friends.

All University of Reading staff can get 15 per cent off at Kings Camps, just use code VSD61 online or over the phone. Call 0114 263 2160 or visit www.KingsCamps.org

INSECT HOTELS AT THE E&F BUILDING

Look out for these ‘insect hotels’ now being placed around the E&F building.

Rhiannon Vaughan had the idea for these, and they’ve been submitted as part of the E&F building’s activities for the 2016 Green Impact award.

Graham Sewell and Ken Dyke (Maintenance) kindly helped with the structure of the hotels, and Rhiannon built the interiors.

The hotels are man-made structures created from natural materials. They are designed to allow insects (notable examples include ladybirds and butterflies) to hibernate.

The hotels are also used as nest sites by insects such as solitary bees and wasps.

SPORTSPARK GOES RED & GREY

SportsPark has re-launched their website with the new University branding.

The website retains its easy navigation, has quick links for booking courts and activities, and joining online couldn’t be simpler: www.sport.reading.ac.uk

SportsPark has also redecorated the gym to match the new University brand colours. The pink and sky blue have gone, and the gym is now red and grey! Head along and take a look!
NEW TEAM MEMBERS

PENELOPE TSOUNOU
Penelope Tsounou has joined the Projects team as CAD and Project Documentation Officer. She’s from Greece, is married and has two little boys. Design is her big passion but she also enjoys travelling and crafting. Her background is in civil engineering. Her previous position was CAD Technician for Oxford University Hospitals Trust, where she gained valuable experience in their estates and facilities department. Penelope’s role is mainly to keep the University’s drawing database up-to-date, so if you are looking for a drawing, please contact her on ext. 6807.

JAIME AL TO
Welcome Jaime! Jaime joined us on 4 January as one of our receptionists at Greenlands.

SCOTT RANDALL
Scott Randall joined the SportsPark team as a Sports Officer in November 2015. He comes with lots of industry experience, having previously worked at Coral Reef for nine years.

JOHN TURNER
John Turner joined the Projects team in September 2015 as a project manager. Prior to this he worked as a project manager for a chemical company (Johnson Matthey in Sonning Common) on a programme of laboratory refurbishments. Just before he joined us he managed to take a few weeks off to enjoy one of his passions: walking. John walked just under 100 miles along the Camino de Santiago in Northern Spain (a 475-mile pilgrimage route that he started walking in 2013) and it’s going to take a few more years for him to finish it. Apart from walking, he enjoys playing hockey and tennis (weather and time permitting).

IAN AND MOIRA’S SANTA RUN

Ian May (Maintenance) would like to thank everyone for their support of December’s Santa Run. A special thanks also to Moira Simpson (from Elf and Safety) for running with Santa. So far, with your generous donations, a fantastic £210 was raised for the Down’s Syndrome Association.

GREENLANDS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Getting everyone together at Greenlands is very difficult, so once a year staff like to enjoy Christmas lunch together and catch up. The photo shows Greenlands front-of-house staff who enjoyed Christmas lunch in their Christmas jumpers: (left to right) Tiago, Graham, Carol, Jill, Jenny, Julia, Paula, Abbie and Jacqui.

GREENLANDS RECEPTION’S NEW LOOK

Last November and December, Greenlands re-decorated their reception area and nearby corridors. To avoid any interruptions to the school, the decorators worked at night. Both areas now look much brighter and fresher. Special thanks to the decorators for such a great job!

MASTERS DEGREES FOR LUCY AND KEVIN

Congratulations to Lucy Virtue and Kevin Doyle who each graduated with a Master of Arts in Applied Management from Henley Business School. This is the result of three years of part-time study whilst working full-time. Lucy said: ‘Our Graduation Day was a very happy and momentous day after three years of hard graft!’

CONGRATS RUTH

Ruth Harris (Environmental and Sustainability Coordinator) has been keeping busy over the winter months by studying for her Associate Membership to the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA). IEMA is the largest professional membership body for the environment, with over 15,000 members working across all industry sectors. Ruth signed up for the self-study module last year and has successfully completed the examination. Ian Cruickshank (Environment & Sustainability Manager) asks us all to join him in congratulating Ruth.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

Please send your articles and pics for the next 24/7 newsletter to Maria: m.swan@reading.ac.uk