

# Awards & Standards - Case Study

University for the Creative Arts  
Library & Learning Services

## *About the organization*

**Organisation:** University for the Creative Arts  
**Department:** Library & Learning Services  
**Size:** 93 employees  
**Industry Sector:** Higher Education

University for the Creative Arts (UCA) is a specialist university for creative arts subjects. It has five campuses at Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester, with more than 6,000 students.

The department of Library and Learning Services (LLS) within the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) comprises the University Library and Study Advisory Services and is host to VADS, the national image repository and digital service provider for the visual arts.

## *Why choose the Customer Service Excellence Standard?*

Following the achievement of University title Library and Learning Services underwent a departmental review and re-structure to align closely with the University's new structure and to create capacity for innovation and development of services.

The restructure resulted in the creation of functional teams to lead services across the five campuses, including Customer Services, which was responsible for delivering high quality, user-oriented front line Library and Learning Services to staff and students across the University. Customer Services selected the Customer Services Excellence (CSE) as it enabled them to evaluate service provision from the perspective of users and use this knowledge to improve their experience. The department gained certification in March 2011.

## *Implementation*

In preparation for submission, Customer Services established a working group to assess their services against the standard's criteria. The working group was comprised of representatives from each section within the department, which provided an excellent opportunity for staff from different sites and functions to collaborate on the project. The overall aim was to evaluate provision from the perspective of users and use this knowledge to improve their experience.

Preparation included assessing services against the standard, consulting with staff and students and researching and applying best practice from other libraries and organisations. The process of review provided new insights and all the feedback was used to enhance provision.

### *Involvement*

Working towards the CSE required a substantial investment of staff time and resources. At UCA, the working group met once every 6-8 weeks to monitor and review progress, plan, develop and implement more transparent services for users and prepare submission documentation for the CSE assessment. The working group comprised of representatives from each of the department's functions and included staff from all levels, who were responsible for liaising with other departments during the assessment and the site visit. The process for UCA's CSE submission, from start to finish, took approximately 16-18 months.

### *What were the benefits?*

LLS used the CSE to review and shape the services that they provide to their users. The award recognises services that continually seek to be "efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering" and UCA Library & Learning Services were able to demonstrate with real examples.

The award recognised that Library & Learning Services put their users "at the heart" of their provision, which has led to a change in culture where the customer/user becomes the key driver for change. During the process, LLS improved signage which has made navigation around the libraries easier, and published feedback on their website making the service more transparent, and used student feedback to shape the creation of zoned areas within the library spaces.

The skills developed by LLS during the CSE, such as creating customer journeys and carrying out focus groups and surveys have been used since when planning for space refurbishments and for developing the library catalogue. As the CSE encourages continual improvement through the yearly reviews, the benefits to LLS's customers have been continuous since the decision to go for the standard was made.

### *What were the lessons learnt?*

In journeying through the submission for the CSE, the lessons learnt were:

- By gaining a greater understanding of the different customer groups and their needs, this has enabled LLS to develop services in response to their customer's needs.
- By improving and expanding the use of different communication channels, exploring new and different methods of obtaining feedback about services and responding more transparently to feedback, LLS has further developed their relationships with their customers.
- By using the CSE and embedding and driving continuous service improvement, LLS can demonstrate its vision of putting the customer at the heart of what they do.

"The Standard is a very challenging one to meet and is increasingly seen as a measure of a quality service. The achievement not only reflects your own commitment but is also an acknowledgement of the effort of everyone who works for the organisation. emqc would like to congratulate you and your team on this excellent achievement."