Assistant Facilities Manager
Development Programme Evaluation Report
Background to the Programme

The Assistant Facilities Manager (AFM) Development Programme was initiated by the Head of Campus and Residential Services, following the reconfiguration of the management roles within Facilities, as part of the Gateway project.

This project saw the reconfiguration of the main MMU campus, the introduction of new roles and structures, and the opening of new and refurbished buildings.

The main objectives for the programme were to:

• Provide an opportunity for Grade 7 managers to assess themselves against MMU Competency Frameworks and identify development areas
• Develop capability within the new roles to allow Grade 9 Facilities Managers to become involved in strategic work
• Address the staff development Priority: Developing Management and Leadership Capability
• Support the participants in leading change through the Gateway project
• Support succession planning within Facilities
• Provide a mechanism to involve participants in leading high profile change projects.

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AFM Programme
Approach

As many of the participants had undergone a high volume of training in the past, it was decided to use a variety of development methods to provide the greatest stretch for those involved. The blend included live project working, the use of the Belbin Team Role instrument and external networking and benchmarking with the Marriott Hotels Group.

In terms of the content of the programme, a launch session in January 2012 was used to scope this out with the participants. A blend of reflection against MMU competencies and discussion around the challenges of the role was used as the basis to help participants direct their own learning.

- Areas arising from this included:
- Getting support to manage the Gateway transition project
- Working more closely as a team and sharing best practice
- Managing projects using appropriate tools and techniques
- Confidence in preparing and delivering presentations
- Opportunities for networking and awareness of external best practice
- Managing difficult conversations with staff and stakeholders

To ensure participant needs were met, discussion took place throughout the programme that enabled participants to agree dates and shape content to best meet their needs. An anonymous online evaluation was completed halfway through the programme to ascertain progress and effectiveness. The final programme schedule can be found at Appendix 1.
Individual Outcomes

The evaluation process commenced with an initial reaction taken from all participants at the end of the final session. Their responses are shown in the image below.

Following the development centre, allowing time for reflection, an anonymous online survey tool was used to capture more detailed feedback on the programme. In parallel to this, a short questionnaire was sent to participants’ line managers to gather their feedback on the programme. Participants reflected on the change they experienced in their ability to tackle areas explicitly addressed during the programme. The results are shown below:

![Self perceived changes as a result of AFM programme](chart.png)
Whilst an improvement in the areas specifically addressed in the programme was expected, the most encouraging outcome was a significant change in participants’ perceived ability to perform their role because of the development.

Comments from the qualitative data included:

“More confidence in the current role.”

“Managing what I do with a more structured approach.”

“When dealing with staff on difficult issues I think about the theories we looked at and the use of language; this has been successful.”

This was also reflected in the line manager feedback. Comments included:

“The programme has improved people’s confidence.”

In particular, “confidence to deal with staffing issues and projects.”

Participants also had the opportunity to take part in a Development Centre at the end of the programme; taken up by four AFMs. The Development Centre activities were based around the higher grade Facilities Manager role. The focus of this was progression to the next level within the University. Of the three respondents, all agreed that it helped to consolidate and apply their learning, and to prepare them for tackling the selection process when applying for future management roles.

One participant stated:

“[It] put me into panic for the weekend before, but totally glad that I went through with it as the feedback afterwards was very beneficial to my development.”
AFM Team
Outcomes

Throughout the programme, participants appreciated the opportunity to work as a group. This was embedded by the use of project work and initial team building sessions based around the Belbin Team Roles instrument.

This is one of the clearest benefits from the quantitative data, reflected in comments such as:

“We are much more a team then we were before, we now know each other’s strengths and can draw on that”

“We can as individuals pool our significant experience and support each other. Previously AFMs Residential and Campus never really met so this has been really useful “

The closer teamwork reflected particularly around support for managers going through Gateway:

“I think we are a much closer and supportive group of managers.”

“I found this to be very productive and although I have been in post a number of years things change and this helped adapt and guide others through the changes”

This also reflects line managers’ feedback, several of whom identified, “the opportunity to network and work with colleagues from different areas” as one of the main benefits of the programme.

The group also expressed a desire to maintain this closer working relationship by continuing to meet on a regular basis, as reflected in the evaluation questionnaire:

“The ability to ‘get together’ regularly is a clear benefit, mainly to share knowledge and practice.”
Outcomes For Facilities

The impact of the programme has also been felt outside the AFM team. The group project work focussed on an accommodation welcome event (Residential Services), and a cleaning materials evaluation and accompanying design for a new ordering system (Campus Services).

The welcome event was particularly successful, with an expanded event now underway for 2013. The outcomes from the 2012 event were featured in University Business magazine.

For the participants, the outcomes have affected how they see themselves within the wider University, commenting that the programme:

“Helped me to place myself and our section within the overall University and our contribution to the aims and objectives of the University.”

“I think it has made the Grade 7 staff realise that they can have an impact on the work they and their staff do and have been given the necessary tools to do so.”

This is echoed in one of the Facilities Manager’s comments that the most useful aspect of the programme was assisting the Grade 7 staff towards,

“...becoming a team with the other AFMs, especially during Gateway, supporting each other.”

As an outcome of the final session and Development Centre, the group have also worked up a proposal for developing the Grade 5 population, with suggestions on how they can support this project (see recommendations.)

The programme also saw the pilot of the first Development Centre for the University. The participants provided the ideal test group, with observers drawn from across the University. All commented on the high standard they saw from the participants. It also provided the opportunity to embed the new MMU Leadership and Management Competency Framework, which was the first time the framework was used in this way.
Recommendations
For Future Programmes

Two key learnings arose from the programme and subsequent evaluation:

1. Project working needs significant levels of support throughout:
   a. The project needs to be achievable by the group in terms of scope and resource. For Campus Services, elements outside the group’s control led to significant problems in the project implementation.
   b. From the outset, the allocation of a project group mentor helps to support project working. The Residential Service group was supported by the Residential Facilities Manager – a mentor was appointed to the Campus team at the half way point, in order to provide a similar level of direction and advice. Allocation of a mentor and clear project scope may have supported this group more from the start.

2. A closer dialogue between participants, trainers and line managers may also have been helpful. It was left to delegates to reflect on their learning with their manager; a process that could have been more clearly set out and allowed the line manager to actively support the participants learning.

In a similar vein, one Facilities Manager suggested:

“At the outset of future programmes the line manager of participants giving their commitment to support future development activities even if those ‘don’t fit’ with their current role.”
Options
For Further Development
Within Facilities

Having worked through development needs that can be met by training, further development and support for succession planning could be met by the following:

1. At the suggestion of the participants, a regular network for the AFMs would help to maintain the team cohesion developed during the programme. This may need to be supported by clear work objectives.

2. Building on the benefits of sharing experience across different sites and roles, the opportunity for movement around the sites could provide different challenges for AFMs and provide more insights into various aspects of the role.

3. Project working with colleagues from different areas of the University would provide further insights into building relationships with a variety of stakeholders.

4. The participants suggested a similar piece of development to support the Grade 5 population. This was developed into a project proposal as part of the Development Centre, and would provide a basis for participants to maintain their closer working relationships.
## Appendix 1
AFM Programme Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th January 2012</td>
<td>Programme launch and expectation setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>24th January</td>
<td>Belbin team roles and project scoping</td>
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<tr>
<td>13th February</td>
<td>Gateway support session</td>
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<tr>
<td>29th February</td>
<td>Project management training</td>
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<tr>
<td>30th March</td>
<td>Discipline &amp; Capability Modules 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>23rd May</td>
<td>Project reporting session – whole group</td>
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<tr>
<td>11th July</td>
<td>Project scoping session – Campus team</td>
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<td>15th October</td>
<td>Project presentations to panel</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st November</td>
<td>Presentation Skills Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>24th January 2013</td>
<td>Gateway support session</td>
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<tr>
<td>13th February</td>
<td>Discipline &amp; Capability Module 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>15th February</td>
<td>Benchmarking visit with Marriott Hotels</td>
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<td>1st May</td>
<td>Bespoke Advancing Leadership Confidence and Capability Session Part 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>13th May</td>
<td>Bespoke Advancing Leadership Confidence and Capability Session Part 2</td>
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<td>17th- 18th June</td>
<td>Development Centre</td>
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