

RIBA 

Higher Education
Design Quality Forum

 AUDE

*Synopsis of the collaborative workshop delivered at
AUDE Belfast 2010*

Better Communications = Better Projects
by HEDQF for AUDE members

Chaired by

Ian Caldwell, Director of Estates
King's College London

Facilitated by

Simon Austin, Professor of Structural Engineering,
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better communications = better projects

Better Communication = Better Projects, a new initiative this year for HEDQF to deliver a workshop for Estates Directors at AUDE 2010 focussing on finding ways to improve the quality of projects.

HEDQF developed a collaborative, participatory workshop for AUDE, chaired and facilitated by a client, an academic and an architect.

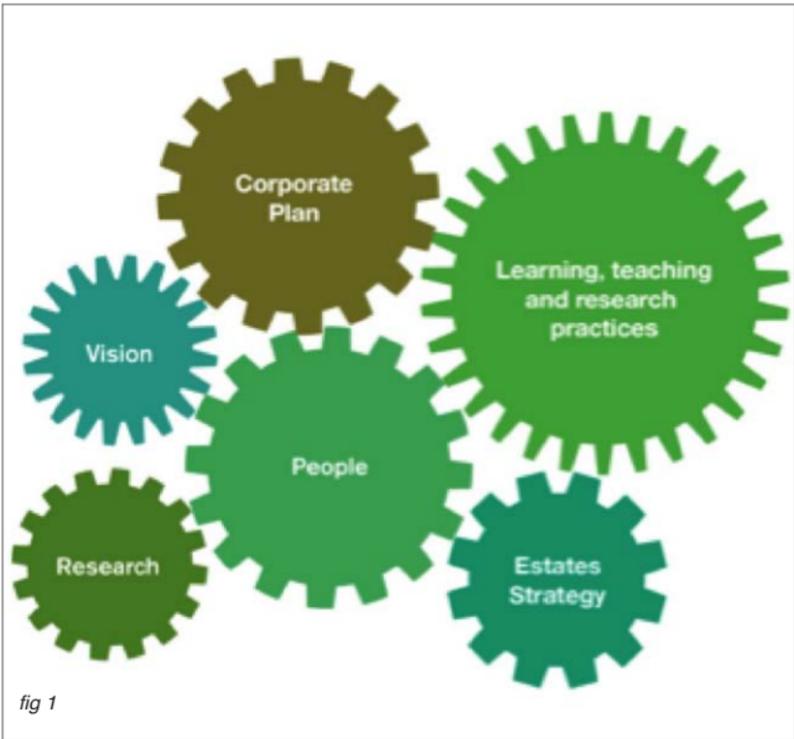
We focussed on finding ways of working more effectively and efficiently to achieve a higher design quality of projects.

The workshop looked at three areas:

- what is a successful project
- how do we measure it
- what has the greatest impact on achieving success

Summary of recommendations

1. HEDQF to work with AUDE to populate the project database and continue to disseminate and share good practice on high design quality within the sector including disseminating POE findings.
2. Academics with experience of engaging in the design and delivery should support peers across the sector, eg between institutions with similar disciplines. To share knowledge about successes and pitfalls to enable high quality to be achieved.
3. Be clear from project inception about roles, responsibility for decisions and dissemination (see figure 1 opposite).

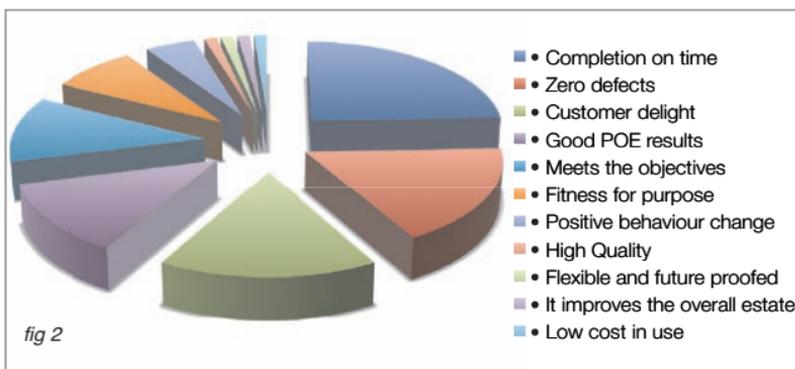


With a clear consensus that successful, high quality projects are those that meet the original objectives and brief, there is an imperative to ensure the brief and aims are defined, captured and disseminated.

The complex, varied and often conflicting requirements of a project call for a clear structure for engagement, development and agreement such that the long term benefit of a high quality environment is not lost in unclear or ineffective decision making.

Clarity about who will: **make** and be responsible for decisions; **participate** and share some responsibility for decisions; be **consulted** about issues requiring decisions and be **informed** about decisions, cannot be underestimated in ensuring that the project objectives and brief are captured and recorded. This should include defining the highest possible quality levels such that the designers have clear aims.

The most widely cited definition of a successful project was that it meets its original objectives, followed by customer delight, on time, on budget and high quality. We recorded the metrics used across the sector, which included a mix of projects (eg building types) and user focussed objectives. Some are easily and readily measured, whilst others, such as customer delight, are more intangible yet just as important. The 23 metrics were rated by frequency of use with the results shown in figure 2.



Many of the findings supported more detailed research carried out as part of the ‘**The Case For New Academic Workspaces**’, (extract slide below). This indicates that the quantitative measures, cost, time budget are requirements but do not alone lead to higher quality results in themselves, as qualitative factors must be considered and prioritised when looking to deliver high quality projects.

What makes projects successful?

- Pilot initiatives
- Training on the use of space
- Leadership by example
- Effective user engagement
- Workspace champions
- Good dialogue and decision-making
- Appropriate use of information and communications technology (ICT)

Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) was cited as the major tool for evaluating and reviewing a project. The more widespread use of POE is essential in learning lessons both good and bad and of paramount importance to improve quality of buildings.

We rounded off by debating ‘what has the greatest impact on the success of a project that could be improved?’.

Key findings focussed on communication...

- 1. Share experience:** often users are only involved in one project but can be great advocates of high quality buildings that work. So sharing experience would enable better understanding and definition of quality throughout the project, including protecting key element through VE.
Key actions - role of a project champion, getting the brief right, project leadership.
- 2. Communication:** use technology where it assists - such as web based estates project updates linked to facebook, twitter etc to encourage students and staff to subscribe.
Key action - engagement with all stakeholders.
- 3. Get the brief right:** access to examples of success and good practice through case study visits to inform the design of current projects. This helps define and manage expectations and ensures that the project is deliverable from the outset.
Key actions - the brief should avoid unrealistic constraints, have an adequate budget and include quality aspirations.

Participants

Alan Burrell
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Royal Veterinary College
London Metropolitan University
Queen Mary University London
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Birmingham City University
London School of Economics
University of Strathclyde
Newcastle University
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Chair

Ian Caldwell
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Facilitator

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Facilitator

Rupert Cook
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Case studies referred to...

The Case For New Academic Workspaces

This report draws on our case study research into new academic workspaces in the UK, distilling the lessons learnt from these innovative projects to offer guidelines for future implementation. It describes the challenges of academic workspace design in the 21st century and considers various strategies and design solutions that can help to achieve the goals of a higher education institution and its academic members.

<http://www.academicworkspace.com/>



Royal Veterinary College Teaching and Research Centre & CEEED

The new Teaching and Research Centre (TaRC) at RVC's Hawkshead campus will provide a new entrance building, social learning space and combined teaching and research laboratories, some of the first of their kind in Europe. Following a close engagement and collaboration programme to inform the successful design of the Centre for Emerging Endemic and Exotic Diseases, a series of workshops with researchers, academics, libraries and estates. A variety of communication methods - models, precedents visits, sketches and diagrams - are used to involve all those concerned in developing ideas, adjacencies, scale, character and principles behind the design.

Opposite: Designed by architecture **plb**, CEEED brings together academics from a variety of research areas into one centre.

Below: Example of engagement workshop, lead by architecture **plb**, with the RVC steering group to develop briefing and design for TaRC.



In these challenging, but highly competitive times, the quality of our higher education environment for staff and for students is increasingly important, while the fast changing world of technology and carbon-reduction impacts on us all. The Higher Education Design Quality Forum, sponsored by the RIBA, is a partnerships of clients, designers and others involved in creating modern educational environments, to debate issues, look to the future, research and promulgate lessons to be learnt from current exemplars, all with the aim of maintaining and enhancing the quality of those environments for future generations.

The HEDQF believes that a high quality building should:

- Meet users needs and exceed their expectations
- Provide a positive environment for the activities that are accommodated
- Make a positive contribution to its immediate surroundings
- Help to promote a sense of community and social interaction
- Be economic in maintenance and running terms
- Be constructed with future needs or possible uses in mind
- Be environmentally appropriate and incorporate current best practice
- Provide value for money
- Be constructed on time and on budget

The forum arranges a regular program of events so if you are interested in further information on the HEDQF, would like to be added to the HEDQF regular newsletter or would like more details on any of the events, please email clientforum@inst.riba.org.

This synthesis of the work for Better Communication = Better Projects was provided by:

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