

# Case Study



## UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



'From commitment to accreditation, the Customer First Standard has helped all staff to focus on quality customer service, and the need to strive for continuous improvement.'

### Who Are You?

University of Leeds – Residential and Commercial services

### What is Your Customer First Status?

Achieved compliance for the first time in April 2009

### Why Go For Customer First?

- Support the university's strategic theme of providing an Exceptional Student Experience
- Increase customer satisfaction levels
- Grow commercial viability

### What Were The Benefits of Being Assessed?

- After completing the self assessment, an action plan could be agreed and completed
- We were able to ensure our publications and web pages were targeting the right markets
- We were able to start linking our staff review process to customer service objectives and feedback

### What Improvements Followed?

- Positive increase in customer ratings in our annual survey
- Complaint numbers are down
- Staff are actively engaged in service improvements

### Why Are You Recommending Customer First?

- The Standard underpins the principles of excellent customer service from the minute someone makes contact with your organisation
- It also emphasises the importance of listening and acting on customer feedback

Contact: [Kim Whitaker](#)

Tel: [0113 3433686](tel:01133433686)

Email: [k.a.whitaker@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:k.a.whitaker@adm.leeds.ac.uk)

Web: [www.leeds.ac.uk/rcs/index](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/rcs/index)

**‘The Customer First Standard underpins the principles of excellent customer service from the minute someone makes contact with your organisation, as well as emphasising the importance of listening and acting on customer feedback.’**

Residential and Commercial Services (RCS) at the University of Leeds are responsible for looking after the welfare of over 30, 000 students. As part of the second largest university in the UK, Residential and Commercial Services are putting the wants and needs of their students first.

Their work towards achieving Customer First accreditation is part of a vision that sees the University of Leeds as one of the top 50 universities in the world by 2015.

RCS is one of the largest departments in the university, providing accommodation for almost 8,000 students across 17 residence sites; catering services to all students and staff across 14 outlets, and delivery and management facilities for conferences and events.

Achieving Putting the Customer First® means that Residential and Commercial Services are now differentiating themselves from other universities by showing that their students are at the heart of everything they do.

In working towards the Standard, RCS objectives included increasing customer satisfaction, growing their commercial viability, and supporting the university’s strategic theme of providing an Exceptional Student Experience.

Many positive outcomes came from Residential and Commercial Services’ assessment, benefiting the department both internally and externally.

Through setting in place new systems, procedures, and actions with regard to customer feedback and consultation, RCS has seen a rise in customer satisfaction levels, which ultimately will influence their planning processes, and bring them closer to the University’s strategic theme of providing an Exceptional Student Experience.

Other outcomes include revising service agreements with business partners; developing and investing in the property portfolio in line with customer expectations; and ensuring that publications and web pages are targeting appropriate markets.

As a department that employs over 350 staff, working towards Customer First, has also enabled RCS to develop their recruitment and employee handling processes. Recruitment, induction, and training of staff are now based on the Residential and Commercial Services staff values, and customer feedback and service objectives are used during all staff reviews.

From a customer’s perspective the buildings and facilities managed by the department have been updated, as well as frequent open days being held to help students make more informed choices. The social aspect of student community building within accommodation has also been developed to ensure that any student’s first few days at the University of Leeds are as enjoyable and worry free as possible.

Through understanding their customers’ needs and preferences, the staff at RCS now have the ability to deliver outstanding customer service at all times.

