



## UNIVERSITY OF HULL

### University of Hull

The university's academic portfolio contains 50 disciplines across the arts and humanities, business, education, health, the sciences and the social sciences. The National Student Survey consistently ranks the university in the top 10 mainstream English universities.

### Background

Catering and accommodation services form a key part of the University support structure. An extensive range of catering services is provided across the Campus for staff and students. In addition hospitality and conference services are also provided. Services range from coffee bars and pop-ups to full dining services. The catering facilities are housed in a variety of both old and new buildings across the estate.

### Brief

Litmus was commissioned to work closely with the in-house team to undertake a comprehensive review of the catering services including:

- ▶ Service standards, the facilities, branding, marketing & merchandising, financial controls and performance as well as the identification of opportunities for service improvement, purchasing, revenue growth and profit improvement;
- ▶ Benchmarking using a number of key industry ratios;
- ▶ Undertaking a customer survey;
- ▶ Inputting to the design and refurbishment of catering facilities;
- ▶ Developing options and recommendations for the future development of the catering services to enable informed decisions to be made; and
- ▶ Developing a draft strategy for catering.

### Approach

**Chris Durant, the Litmus Partnership, said:** "Our overall aim was to find innovative ways to drive revenue and improve profitability from the catering services at the university, taking into account student needs, key stakeholder expectations, best practice and the challenge presented by local competition.

"We spent time on the estate observing catering outlets, retail outlets and back-of-house operations and attended a series of meetings with key stakeholders and the management team to develop a better understanding of current strategy, service levels, processes and procedures. We also conducted on-site canvassing to gain an understanding of both satisfaction levels and the satisfaction gap – this gave some very interesting insight.

"Alongside reviewing operations, we also analysed financial performance and projected forecasts."

## Outcomes

Litmus prepared a full review along with recommendations for the future strategic and operational management of the catering services, identifying revenue growth opportunities. A strategic planning workshop was subsequently held with key stakeholders.

▶▶ *Litmus invested the time to understand what we do and what we want to do to improve our services. Their insight, experience and impartiality contributed significantly to shape our plans for the future. We would not hesitate to use their services again.* ◀◀

*Stephen Willis, Chief Finance Officer, University of Hull*



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