



University of Limerick  
Students Union

Aontas na Mac Léinn  
Ollscoil Luimnigh

University of Limerick  
Students' Union

# NEW STUDENT CENTRE FACILITIES

PROPOSAL

Ruan.Dillon.McLoughlin

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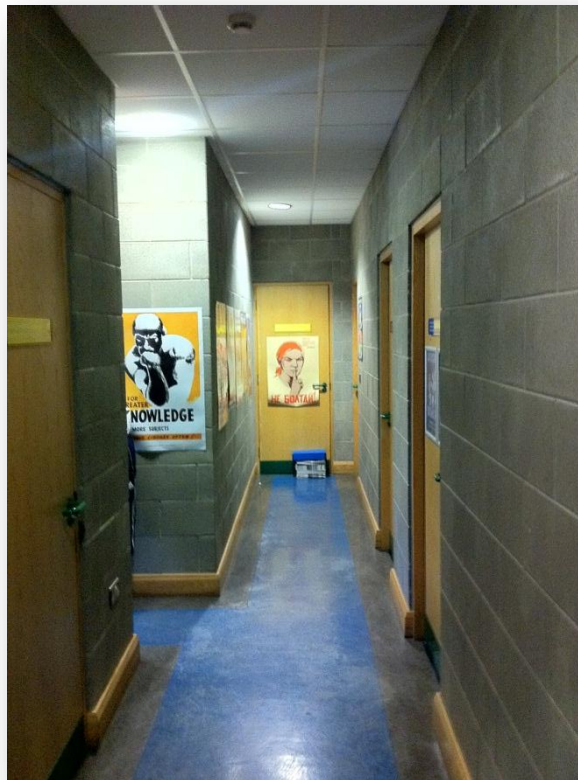
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## 1.0 EXISTING FACILITIES

Current the Student Centre is primarily a mix of Commercial Units and Office Space. The Students Union is not very welcoming in internal appearance to the Students. The building does not lend itself to use by the general student population. The Students Union is growing and at the moment there is no capacity to allow for additional Services or indeed communal space for Students and the campus community. There are currently over 50 Clubs and Societies all in need of meeting space. As it currently stands in the Students Union there are 2 rooms available during academic hours and the Co Op rooms are available after 6 pm. This leaves one meeting room with a capacity of greater than 10 people. Meetings are being held in lecture theatres across the campus diluting the vibrancy of Clubs and Societies working together.

Office Accommodations are suitable for the purpose of workspace. In the current configuration they do not engender a good team

dynamic and can be intimidating for Students to approach.



Commercial Units as they are currently configured due to the changes over the years have led to a disconnect. There is no sense of a commercial centre or a "street" environment. The services provided should all be re-evaluated to meet the current demands.

Night Time Entertainments revolve around the Stables Bar and Scholars Club. Both of these serve their purpose as a Bar / Restaurant, but do not offer a viable solution for the provision of Student Entertainment. The lack of a covered weather proofed venue capable of holding 800 – 1000 students means that the Students Union are limited in the events

that can be provided for Students on the campus grounds throughout the semesters.

## 2.0 CONCEPT

Modern

Spacious

Bright

Inviting

Student ownership

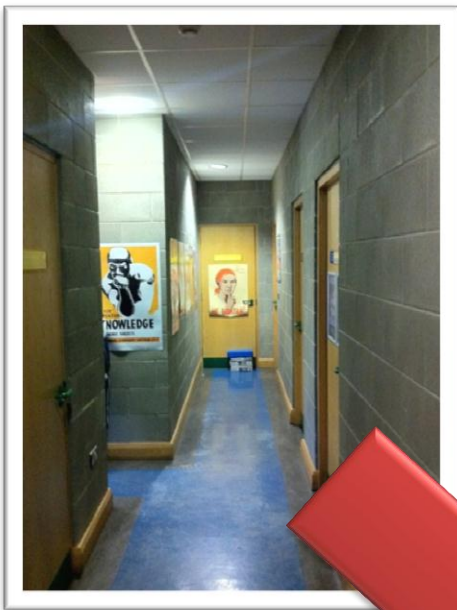
Place where people want to meet

State of the art

Google-esque

No corridors

Casual space



## 3.0 FACILITIES NEEDED

### 3.1 ENTRANCE FOYER

The foyer area of the Union should be prominent, inviting and welcoming. A central student information desk would be needed. The information desk would deal with general student queries from students. It would act as an administration point for rooms in the building.

Interactive information screens should be available for students to check the availability of rooms and to make room bookings.

The common area should be located off or around the reception area.



### 3.2 RECEPTION AREA

Reception Area must be capable of allowing up to 2 people work comfortably at the front desk. The reception should be the first point of call for visitors to the student centre and should act as an information point for the centre.

- *1 Reception desk*
- *Room booking system*



### 3.3 COMMON AREA

The Common area would be a meeting place for students. It should be an area where people would naturally arrange to meet and socialise. It needs to be easily assessable to student. The area needs to be inviting, open and spacious. The area needs to accommodate large and small groups. It must be zoned appropriately so it feels inviting if there are only 5 people there or 120 people there. It should facilitate small groups of people to chat comfortable.

The room needs to be very modern with state of the art facilities. The room should be as interactive as possible and engage students.

It should be a room students want to be in and feel comfortable being in.

Here is an example of how Queens University Belfast have layout out their common area which is known as "The Space";

***"The Space is divided in to 5 areas:***

**Room 1:** Room 1 is a large conference style room, it has a capacity of 200. It is accessible from the back stairwell and is located next to the snooker room. Disabled access is available. This room is bookable by students, please email [su.reception@qub.ac.uk](mailto:su.reception@qub.ac.uk) or call 02890973726 to do so.

**Room 2:** Room 2 is the middle area with plasma screens with freeview TV, a projector and DVD player, sofas and newspaper racks. There is also a holding kitchen, this is not available for daily use by students as it is utilised by the Students' Union catering. It has a capacity of 150. This room and projector equipment is bookable by students, please email [su.reception@qub.ac.uk](mailto:su.reception@qub.ac.uk) or call 02890973726 to do so.

**The Breakout area:** The Breakout area is the front area of The Space, It has plasma screens with International and freeview TV, vending machines and newspaper racks. It has a capacity of 150. Disabled access is available. This area is not bookable by students as we try to keep it as flexible and available as possible.

**The computer area:** The computer area has benches and stools for laptop use and 9 computers (no harddrive or printing facilities).Queen's wireless is available and instructions are



located in the area. It has a capacity of 50 people. This area is not bookable by students.

**The Space suite:** The Space Suite is a small room just outside the back Space entrance. It has meeting tables and chairs. It has a capacity of 30. This room is bookable by students, please email [su.reception@qub.ac.uk](mailto:su.reception@qub.ac.uk) or call 02890973726 to do so."

- **On ground floor**
- **Bright and spacious**
- **Inviting**
- **Multipurpose**
- **Zoned with different areas**
- **Min capacity – 200 people**



### 3.4 CASUAL SPACE

The building should be laid out so that there are inviting and comfortable casual areas for students to sit down and chat informally. Corridors should be avoided where possible throughout the building. Offices and rooms should be built around different welcoming leisure areas where students feel welcome to sit down and chat.



### 3.5 “BREAK-OUT” AREAS

University academic work involves a lot of group project work for students. There is very little space around the campus where such work can take place.

15+ purpose designed work areas should be incorporated. These may be a mix of “breakout” rooms with glass fronts or just “breakout” areas. Whiteboard and any suitable technologies should be incorporated to maximise the use of these areas.

Any specific “breakout” rooms should be screened off using glass so people can see if the rooms are free or not.



### 3.6 GAMES ZONE

A relaxing area is needed for students between classes. Pool tables and other forms of entertainment should be facilitated.

Multi-player gaming console stations should be facilitated.

- **8 Pool tables**
- **Arcade games x3**
- **2 x 4 player console station**
- **Room for additional services**

### 3.7 CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Clubs and Societies, along with Class Reps, lie at the heart of the Students' Union. They are the main avenue for encouraging student engagement.

We have over 60 Clubs and Societies in UL all with a wide range of needs. Our aim is to try and facilitate these Clubs and Societies as much as possible under the one roof. By providing the facilities needed for these C&S under the one roof we can create a vibrant active hub.

Our C&S are among the most active in the country and regularly win national awards. With additional facilities we hope to encourage an even greater involvement among students.

Our Clubs and Societies hold weekly talks and presentations which require an auditorium with a capacity of 200+ people. At present they are required to book lecture theatres around campus which can cause difficulty. All of these events should be facilitated in the student centre. A large number of these events are high profile events so the auditorium would need to have easy access. An appropriately sized foyer would also be required.

C&S activities are quite varied, as a result a multipurpose room, approx. 100 people, would be required for workshops and group work activities. This room could be broken down into two 50 people rooms to facilitate smaller group sessions.

Each Club and Society has a weekly/fortnightly committee meeting. At present a large number of these meet in University canteens and other such areas that aren't conducive to productive meeting. Three 20 people meeting rooms would be required to facilitate such meetings in the students centre.

The Music Society facilitates new start up musicians and bands. They require one large room that would facilitate a full band performing. A second medium sized room would also be required for smaller groups. Both rooms would have to have the adequate sound insulation qualities and air conditioning qualities. A recording studio would also be required but this could be facilitated as part of the radio studio.

C&S have a large number of events they need to sell tickets for and also put on displays/information sessions. These would need to take place in a high traffic communal area to gain maximum exposure.

### 3.7.1 ROOMS/AREAS

- **200 person Auditorium**
  - **Foyer area**
  - **Inviting to high profile speakers**
- **100 person room with partition to make it 2x 50ppl**
- **3 x 20 person meeting rooms**
- **Music Room 1x Large, 1x Medium**
- **Photo Studio**
- **Box offices/area**
- **High traffic display/presentation area**
- **Box Office and sign-up area**



### 3.7.2 WORK AREA

C&S work is very admin heavy. To facilitate this work a conducive work area is needed. The room should be set up to facilitate formal work and casual work. The room should also facilitate small group brainstorming areas.

“Breakout” rooms should be available. These rooms would be used as a quiet area for impromptu discussions or phone calls. The break out rooms should be able to facilitate up to 10 people.

There are two full time employees dedicated to helping develop and administer C&S. These offices should be part of the Work area with a glass partition.

- **Centralised open work area - worktop and computer space for up to 20ppl**
- **“break-out” areas for group discussions**
- **3 x “break-out” offices**
- **2 x Full-time offices**

### 3.7.3 STORAGE

- **Equivalent in footprint to a 40 person room.**

## 3.8 CLASS REPS

Class reps, Like C&S, play a vital role in the Union. Class reps carry out a lot of administration work on behalf of their class. An area similar to the C&S work area would be ideal. The area must be welcoming and easily assessable.

- **Centralised open work area - worktop and computers**
- **“break-out” areas for group discussions**

## 3.9 POSTGRADUATE COMMON AREA

Postgraduate students need a specific area for themselves. It may be possible to achieve a separate area through clever design. The area should facilitate up to 100 people.

- **100 person Postgrad area**

## 3.10 MEDIA

### 3.10.1 WRITTEN

"An-Focal" the Student fortnightly newspaper is a central part of the Union. It relies heavily on student contributions. This area should be a creative space for writers, providing them with everything they need to write for the paper. As well as being a social space for trading of ideas it must also create space for students to complete articles. The area needs to be inviting to new writers as much as possible. All computers should be networked.

- **Inviting area**
- **6 networked desks with computers**
- **Casual work space/area**

One, sound proofed, glass clad rooms with blinds. The rooms would have a telephone with audio conference facility. The rooms need not be very big, but should comfortably accommodate at least eight people.

Two rooms would be ideal. At least one is essential. Rooms would double up in function as meeting rooms.

- **1 sound proof rooms. Fit 8 people**

### 3.10.2 STORAGE

The obvious requirements such as filing, An Focal ultra-dry storage, archiving, stationery and a safe for expensive equipment such as the Union Camera, Laptops, Dictaphones etc.

### 3.10.3 RADIO/TV

There would be a radio studio, such as there was in the original student centre. This studio would have an office for administration and planning as well as a storage room for equipment and a storage room for archive. The radio studio would be large enough for a band to comfortably perform in.

- **1 administration office**
- **1 studio room**
- **1 storage room**

## 3.11 OFFICE SPACE

### 3.11.1 SABBATICAL OFFICERS

Sabbatical Officers should be located in a visible location close to student traffic and easily accessible from the main foyer. If possible the offices should have a glass wall or allow visibility. There are currently 6 Sabbatical Officers including the PSA. To allow for Non Sabbatical roles and the executive we should allow for 8 working offices. The Sabbatical area should also have 3 small reception rooms where one to one meetings can be held away from the workspace. There should also be a breakout room in the Sabbatical Area that can accommodate 12 people for an impromptu meeting. A waiting area would also be required.



Image – Style of office



### 3.11.2 STAFF OFFICES

Similar to the sabbatical glass wall layout.

- **Administration secretary:** will need an office close to the Sabbatical area. A filing and archive room is required adjacent to this office.
  - **Events Co-Ordinator :** Will need a working office with lockable storage facilities for Entertainments Crew supplies. This office should be located on a main thoroughfare for easy student access.
  - **Accounts Staff** – Office space close to archive room for filing purposes. Would need to provide working space for 3 people.
  - **Secretary General** – Working Office Space with a safe and an area to receive visitors
  - **Operations Office** - There should be an annex off Reception which would include a working office for the Reception Manager, a stock room to hold supplies for sale as well as the Union Stationary requirements. This annex should also house the building control panel including CCTV monitors, Fire Panels and Circuit Boards etc. Adequate lockable shelving to be included for to facilitate growth of the.
- 
- **6 x Sabbatical offices**
    - **On ground floor**
    - **Very accessible and visible to students**
  - **1 x office for 3 ppl - Accounts**
  - **3 x regular offices - sec gen, admin sec, reception manager**
  - **1 x medium office – ents**
  - **1x operations office**

### 3.11.3 BOARD ROOM

- **Full video conferencing facilities Board room capacity 20 people around a table**

## 3.12 OTHER FACILITIES REQUIRED

- **Staff Room, comfortable surroundings for up to 20 people with cooking facilities**
- **2 Climate Controlled Server Rooms, one for Union use and one for Clubs and Societies**
- **1 Storage room for Union Banners, Pull Ups etc**
- **Wireless Access throughout the Building**

### 3.13 COMMERCIAL OUTLETS

- Ideally all these facilities should be accommodated of a central thoroughfare or courtyard. If feasible open entrances with pull down shutters to make the appearance open and welcoming.
- All eateries should share a communal seating area to allow for mix and match for the Campus Community

#### 3.13.1 SU STUDENT SERVICES SHOP

At present that majority of our services are facilitated through the SU reception. A separate shop is needed to facilitate these services.

There is a need for a UL merchandise shop. These could be facilitated in the same area. The shop would provide University branded clothing and merchandise both for students and visitors.

A left luggage services is also provided from the reception at present. Students leave their bags into the reception where they are stored in a safe place until their return. This service also needs to be facilitated.

- ***UL, ULSU and Clubs and Societies Merchandise***
- ***Second Hand Book service***
- ***Left Luggage storage facility and cloak room.***
- ***Additional Box Office – Bus, Event Tickets for Campus and beyond***

#### 3.13.2 CURRENT COMMERCIAL

- ***Convenience Store – Similar in size to current ULSU Spar Operation***
- ***Bike Shop***
- ***Bank***
- ***Launderette***
- ***Laptop Repair and Mobile Phone Shop***
- ***Print Facilities***
- ***Travel agent***
- ***Bar / Coffee Shop***
- ***Restaurant***
- ***Carvery Lunch Option***
- ***Bookshop (New and Second hand)***

#### 3.13.3 POTENTIAL NEW COMMERCIAL SERVICES

- ***Off Licence***
- ***Barber Shop / Hairdressers, / Beauty Parlour***
- ***Fast Food Dining Option***
- ***Pharmacy – Failing a full pharmacy a dispensary should be provided***
- ***Green energy Car refuel solution, electric car ports or battery pack chargers***

### 3.14 BICYCLE FACILITIES

- *Secure, covered bike parking with storage, changing and showering facilities*

### 3.15 ADDITIONAL STUDENT CENTRE REQUIREMENTS

- *Contemplative centre*
- *Mosque*
- *Teach Failte*
- *Alumi Offices*
- *PCC Offices*
- *Co-op Offices*

### 3.15 STORAGE

A large storage/goods inwards area is required. The room would need to be the equivalent size of a 50 person room.

## 3.16 NIGHT TIME VENUES

### 3.16.1 CINEMA

The Student's Union currently has a licence to show any film which isn't currently in a cinema, as long as it has legally obtained it. We also have a large cinema screen, but no indoor venue large enough to facilitate the showing of films to a large audience.



There has been a demand for mainstream cinema to date from students. With the facility of a purpose built cinema this could become a weekly event on our calendar.

There is also a use for the cinema from our Clubs and Societies who regularly show films to their members and wider groups.

By having this cinema in UL it would offer a regular, cheap, alcohol free alternative for student entertainment.



Cinema listing from Sheffield University

- 200 seat capacity
- Full cinema seats
- Full sound and picture

### 3.16.2 STUDENT BAR/DISCO BAR

At present there is a student bar in the Student Centre. There is a great opportunity to modernise this venue and make it into a purpose built Student bar.

Through clever design the bar can be utilised as a social space and restaurant and at night it can be transformed into a popular night time destination.

There is a need for an on campus late club, where students can socialise with their friends in a safe, supervised environment away from the housing estates in Castletroy.

The bar/disco would need to have a first aid room, a CCTV monitoring room, a back store, facility for showing matches on a big screen and a stage/DJ box.

There could be a way to double up the student venue and student bar, and keep a modern feel to both.



*Nottingham Students Union*



*Birmingham Students Union*



*QUBSU Student Bar*

- **Open, fresh, versatile and adaptable**
- **Performance area**
- **See Galway and QUB Student bars**

### 3.16.3 VENUE

Currently student events over 200 capacity are held outdoors in the Student Union Courtyard.

This means that the events are restricted to certain months of the year when the temperature outside is acceptable to stage such events.

Which means we are very limited in the amount of events we can hold in our academic year.



*Dolans warehouse- Limerick*

When we do put these events in the Courtyard we have to hire full production (stage, pa and lights), which has to be incorporated into the ticket price for each show as well as the artist fee.

We are very conscious of keeping the ticket price low and affordable for the students however; it is proving near impossible to secure an act that will appeal to many but with a very low fee as the majority of the ticket revenue can cover the production costs.

Having our own venue with in house production with eliminate this problem and allow us to book an act of a higher caliber.

The fact that the venue would be indoors means we would not have to worry about the weather thus guaranteeing events throughout the year.



The venue should have removable seats to accommodate a variety of different acts or shows. There would need to be a green room for the artist, three dressing rooms a facility to shower in each.



*QUBSU's Mandela Hall*

Another benefit for UL to have their own venue is that Limerick does not have a standing venue above 450 capacity.

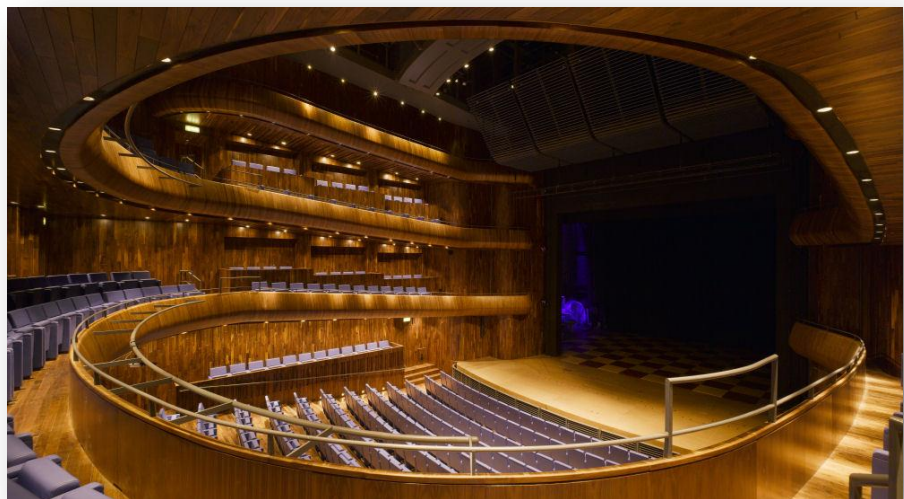
A lot of acts have enquired about performing in Limerick over the last few years but have not being able to due to the small size of our venues.

If we were to have a 1,000 capacity venue which could be configured to various sizes, eg 700 standing downstairs and 300 upstairs on the balcony this would appeal to a variety of different artists and promoters alike.

We could hire it out for various events, generating revenue.

The venue should be designed to facilitate being transformed into a nighttime venue. By being able to run the a night time venue on campus we would be able to encourage students back on campus and ensure they enjoy themselves in a supervised environment.

- 1000 capacity standing or 650 seated
- Seated venue with removable seats
- 10 metre x 8 metre stage
- Loading Bay for Trucks at back of the stage
- 3 dressing rooms with shower and toilet facilities
- 1 Green Room/Common Room
- Projector and Large Screen
- Café
- Bar
- Storage space
- Drapage
- Conference facilities
- Versatile for smaller and bigger gigs
- Versatile for a disco bar



Wexford Opera House



*Sheffield University Night Venue*

## 4.0 FUNDING

It is anticipated that the project would be part funded by the extension of the current Student levy. The levy currently stands at €72. It is anticipated that this levy will cease in mid 2013.

Students would have to authorise the extension of this levy by referendum. As a result the project would need to satisfy the students' needs to ensure the referendum passes.

It is anticipated that a number of other project, such as the refurbishment of the turf paying pitches and the extension to the Arena, could potentially be part funded by the levy. If this was to happen then there would be a need to extend the levy to €150. It must be remembered that if such an increase in the levy was to be sought it is going to be increasingly difficult to get buy-in from students. It is achievable to secure such an increase but only if Students needs are being exceeded and that the University are seen to be ensuring that the project is being built with the best interest of the student at heart.

It would be expected that if Students provide such a high level of funding then the University would match the funding.

## 5.0 TIMELINE

The time-line for project is under some pressure. The current levy will expire some time in mid 2013. By which time we need to have passed a referendum of students to extend the current student levy.

Ideally we need to be going to students with a concept document by March 2012. The more detailed and student focused the plans the more likely it is that the referendum is to pass.

## 6.0 EXTERNAL INPUT

One of the key aspects of the redevelopment is to encourage Students participation and interaction with the Student centre. A number of key UK Universities have recently redeveloped their Students Unions with this key point in mind. Most notably Birmingham University.

It would be beneficial to engage with these Students Unions and the architects involved to try and learn from their experiences

## 7.0 BENEFIT TO UNIVERSITY

The new Student Centre should be built as a flagship Student Centre. It should be used by the University to attract potential students to the University.

The Student Centre will add greatly to each students "Student Experience" and ensure a positive experience in UL.

## 8.0 "FEENEY" STUDENT CENTRE

Chuck Feeney has contributed massively to make UL what it is today. His contribution and ethos should be remembered. How better to recognise this remarkable individual then to name the Student Centre after him.

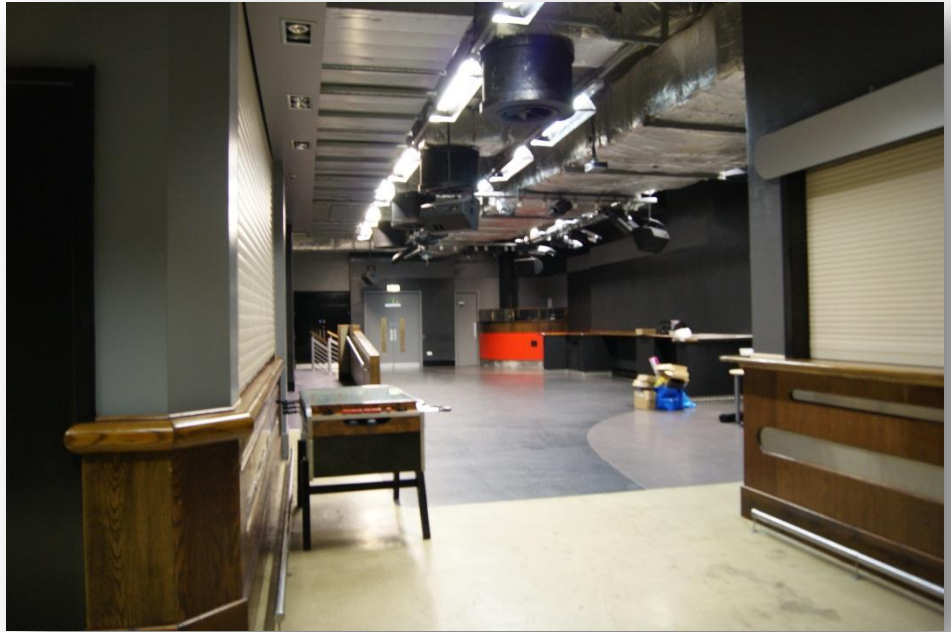
## 9.0 ADDITIONAL IMAGES



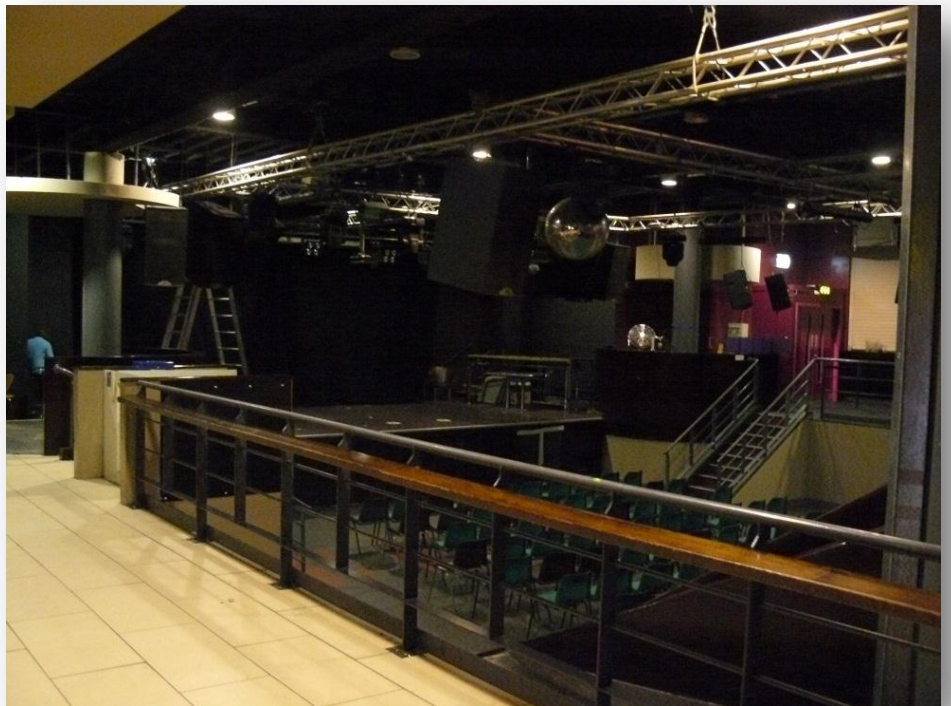
*Leeds University Leisure space*



*Leeds University Merchandise shop*



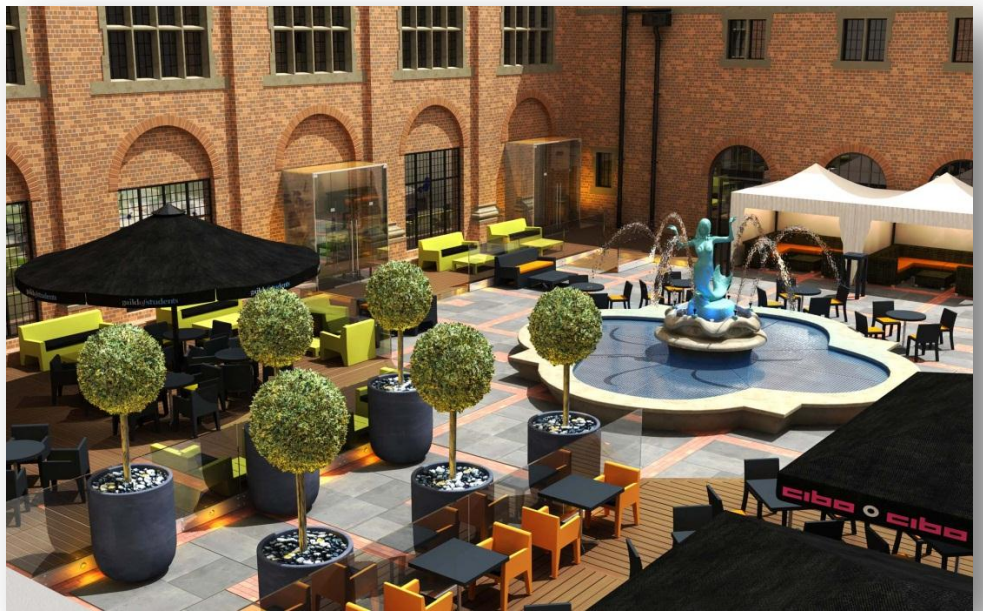
*Leicester Students Union night venue*



*Sheffield University Night Venue*



*Birmingham University Students' Union Bar*



*Birmingham Students Union Courtyard*





*Birmingham Students Union Common area/reception*



*Liverpool University Common Area*



*Boston University – Climbing wall – Centre piece of Student centre*



*Interactive room booking system*



*Casual Student Space*