



management **sweet**



‘This is all about the cross fertilisation of ideas.’ We’re visiting Cranfield Management Research Institute, the impressive new facility at the heart of Cranfield School of Management. As Finance Director Neil Wilson explains, the new building helps bring all of the school’s intellectual capital together as part of a vision to drive the strong research culture within the School.

‘Cranfield is world renowned for the quality of its rigorous research. Our mission is to improve the practice of management – and key components of that aim are our 12 research centres. Research is focused on a range of areas, such as the Bettany Centre for Entrepreneurial Performance and Economics, the Supply Chain Research Centre, the Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility and the International Centre for Women Leaders. It’s clear that there is a need for collaboration and sharing of ideas as there is frequently common ground. Currently there are about 110 [faculty](#)▶

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members involved in our research centres, but it's important to note that it's a dynamic process with different centres growing or shrinking depending on workload. What this facility gives us is the flexibility to help the cross fertilisation of ideas.

'Cranfield University is the UK's only wholly post graduate University. The School of Management is one of its five schools – the others being the schools of Applied Sciences, Defence, Engineering and Health. It's a point worth making that research carried out at Cranfield University has resulted in innovations including uninhabited air vehicles, night vision, voice recognition credit cards and carbon fibre cars, to name just a few. Cranfield is one of Europe's largest academic centres for strategic and applied research, development and design.

'At the School of Management we currently have 700 students studying for MSc, MBA, DBA and PhD qualifications. We operate in a competitive international market – 70% are non-UK students learning both full and part time. The School's structure is divided into four missions: Research, Graduate Programmes, Open Executive Education and Customised Executive Programmes. For many, our remote but accessible rural location (not far from Milton Keynes) is a strong selling point and allows our students to throw themselves into the intense Cranfield experience.'

The design of the new space is an integral part of the Institute's appeal, as Services Operations Manager Maxine Gore explains. 'This is a recycled building! Originally a barracks (Cranfield was a wartime airbase), the building is H-shaped. Entering the building at the base of the H, we now have 'The Hub' – designed for colleagues, researchers and students to meet informally. The main space is a galleried multipurpose area which is used for a wide variety of purposes.'

During our visit the space was furnished with soft breakout seating, but this is frequently reconfigured depending on need. State-of-the-art AV equipment signals the Gallery's frequent use for presentations and seminars.

Ranged around the central areas of the Hub and Gallery are the offices, meeting rooms and research labs that are pivotal to Cranfield's ongoing success. Furnished by Herman Miller, these areas have built-in flexibility to allow us to change as the research centres need. An important part of the design that helps with the collaboration

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►►► in research is the area at the ‘top of the H’. This houses the PSS (Product Service Systems) – a group where product, management and technology teams from different disciplines meet to share ideas and research.’

This is a well designed building. Making intelligent use of existing structures with a subtle nod to the location’s heritage and context, the Cranfield Management Research Institute is sleek and functional. This is primarily a place where academic research is carried out, yet it has a spirit that feels closer to a contemporary office. Communication, collaboration and flexibility are key drivers in an unfussy two storey building that, apparently effortlessly, blends public and private spaces successfully. The inviting Hub and attractively intelligent

Gallery can be (and are) changed and reconfigured on a very frequent basis. Clearly this is a building that has benefited from serious funding.

‘Cranfield is a not for profit organisation,’ explains Neil. ‘This building was part funded by HEFCE with other support coming from the East of England Development Agency and the Wolfson foundation in particular. Funding for research comes from both commercial organisations and from endowments such as the Doughty and Bettany centre donations. Around 50% of income comes from our Executive Education programmes, with only about 5% from government funding. Businesses are attracted by the quality of our research. For example, our Customised Executive Development programme has

contracts with international companies such as Cable & Wireless, Oracle and Kuehne & Nagel. Funded by EDS, a HP company, we recently launched the International Centre for Programme Management a full time research facility – we expect this important research centre to become the leading hub for knowledge, insight and evidence in the area of programme management.’

Cranfield School of Management is in the ideas business – and it’s a competitive market. Attracting high quality students from around the world – Cranfield has about 12,000 alumni, many of whom are CEOs. Proud of its global status, Cranfield’s investment in facilities such as the subject of this case study is testament to its determination to maintain its leadership position ●



essential ingredients

Client:	• Cranfield School of Management
Architect:	• GSS 01536 513165
Systems Furniture:	• Herman Miller 0845 226 7202
Carpets:	• InterfaceFLOR 08705 304030
Blinds:	• D&R Blinds 01604 883744