

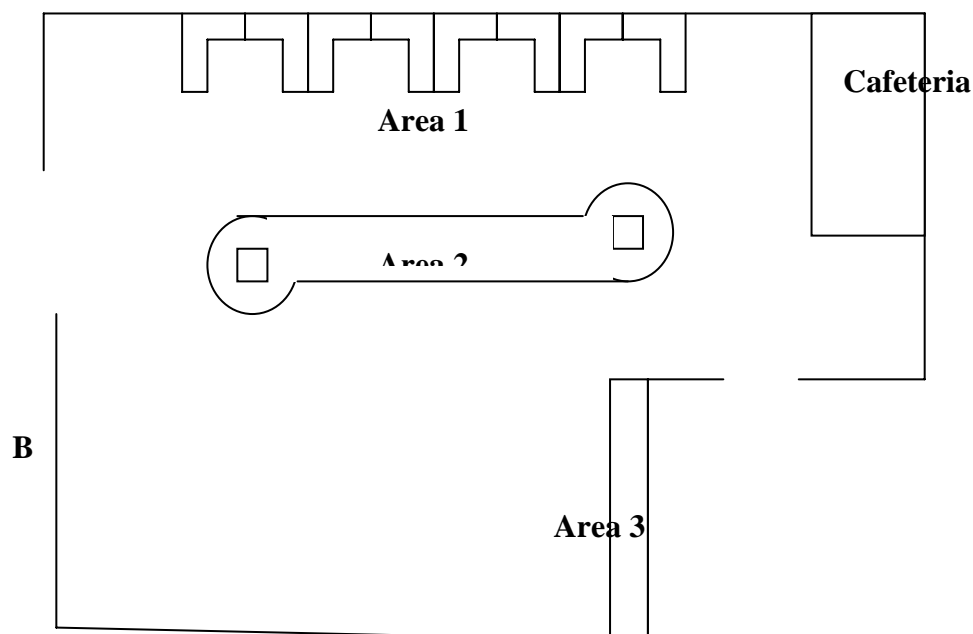
Seating in the Reynolds Bar
An updated proposal by Mark Chamberlain (ICSMSU President)

Background

The Reynolds Bar is the social hub of the Medical School. Events run by ICSMSU and its Clubs and Societies are held there regularly and the success of these this year has contributed to the strong performance against budget for the Bar. The student bar managers have also worked hard to ensure the success of the bar. During the daytime, the bar is a common room for students in lectures and for those on placement in Charing Cross Hospital. During term time, in excess of 350 students are in the building, most of whom use the common room area to sit and have lunch in. The area is also used during the daytime by students who live nearby and staff in the Reynolds building. The bar area is also used in the early evening where there are often club or society meetings occurring and during the first term, this can encompass over 100 students in meetings on a busy night. The seating in the bar area is of two varieties, the first is fixed faux leather seating installed in 2003 and the second is free standing booth seating installed in approx 1998.

The common room is very much the outward face of Imperial College Union (ICU) in the Reynolds building and its state of repair affects how staff and students view ICU. Both of the seating types are past the end of their useful life.

Below is the current plan of the Reynolds bar area (not to scale):



Fixed seating (Area 2 & 3)

- The fixed seating (in the centre of the room – area 2) is poorly designed – it does not use space well as the seats around the end of the pillars are rarely used. The design is not particularly attractive either.
- The fixed seating is poorly constructed and starting to fall apart. The board around the bottom of the seating is cracked in many places. The panels on the top of the seating have been attached with small screws and many of them are becoming detached

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- The faux leather is ripped in several places which looks very bad, as do our temporary repairs with gaffer tape. The following points make the seating easy to damage:
 - The faux leather used is very thin, a thicker faux leather is recommended for use in future
 - The seating is foam based which offers less support to the faux leather covering
- The underlying foam has been damaged where the faux leather has been ripped
- Drinks have been spilt on the holes in the faux leather and have soaked into the foam below, this is becoming a health and safety issue.

Free standing seating (Area 1)

- The free standing booth seating (area 1) is of a different type and does not match the fixed seating
- The free standing booth seats are poorly designed. They are in a rectangular configuration meaning that the space is not well use as no-one can sit in the corner of the seats. Each booth seats 4 people comfortably and another 2 on a bench opposite the booth.
- The construction of the seats is not good for the following reasons:
 - The upholstery is not wipe clean, the seats are foam covered with fabric and have had drinks spilt on them. Again, this is becoming a health and safety issue.
 - One of the benches has completely broken despite numerous repairs
 - The remaining 3 benches need constant attention to keep them in use.
 - The tables used with the seats are stained and becoming unstable

Considerations

When examining possibilities for the improvement of the seating, the following was taken into account:

- The first possibility we looked at was to re-upholster the existing seating. Due to the labour involved and the nature of the seating, some companies refused to take on the work. Of those companies that quoted, the cost was over £5,000 (for area 2 alone). Following this it was decided not to pursue the re-upholstering scenario as it was felt the seating was intrinsically flawed in any case.
- We were advised by companies that the construction of the seating made re-upholstering individual parts very difficult and in any case an exact match would be difficult.
- Suppliers were asked to quote for the replacement of all upholstered seating. It was felt that replacing only part of the seating would still be a significant investment yet would not improve the overall look of the bar - there would be 3 types of seating that would not match.
- In any solution for the seating, we stipulated that the replacement of individual sections of the seating should be possible without much difficulty.
- Due to the arrangement of electrics and window access panels in the Reynolds bar area, the seating has to be free standing in places. All suppliers were asked to quote for free standing seating where relevant.
- The free standing booth seating is often full up during the evening and at lunch times, it currently seats 16 people in 4 booths (+6 on benches). Suppliers were asked to provide quotes on booths which would be able to seat more than this.

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- The quality of the seating design and construction needs to be higher than currently exists to ensure the long life of the seating. For this reason, the upholstery was specified to be thicker faux leather and if possible based on sprung rather than foam seating (cost permitting).

Project Tender

The seating was split into areas 1, 2 and 3 (see picture above). Quotes were obtained from 5 different suppliers, based on the following:

- All seating Faux leather tested to at least 100,000+ Martindale rubs
- Horizontal fluted back (3 bands) – middle band to be cream, the other bands to be chocolate / brown to match décor
- 3 or 4 round booths in area 1 to provide ample seats
- Black wood kickplates
- Area 1 free standing, areas 2 and 3 fixed
- Removal and disposal of current seating

Proposed Option

One previous supplier, Inside Out Ltd, returned a favourable quote of £18,975.16. After taking the decision to only refurbish the seating in areas 1 and 2 as they were in most need, the quote was reduced as follows:

£12,364.00	Revised quote (Ex VAT)
£600.00	3 tables @ £200 each (Ex VAT)
£1,011.16	removal of current seating (Ex VAT)
Total (Ex VAT) = £13,975.16	

Resolution

For ICU Executive committee to agree to fund Reynolds seating improvements up to £12,000 with the remainder to come from ICSMSU Executive funds.