THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ESTATE SERVICES

Protocol for door signage at the University of Leeds

It has been proposed that door signage should be consistent with the University’s adopted Corporate Image, and should also be as accessible as possible.

The Corporate Image currently specifies door signs that are:
   Black on a Silver background
   Arial or other specified characters

Requirements to meet the needs of the partially sighted are:
   Minimum of 20 pitch arial (as this sample)
   Good tonal contrast
   No glare
   A mixture of capitals and lower case letters to be used

Current standard for door signs
The following standard for door signs is currently in use:
   • Separate plates for door numbers and names/titles within one 230mm length shiny silver metal holder, depth of 55mm.
   • Glossy silver background to door plates with black arial letters/numbers engraved to a depth of 0.5mm.
   • Character size of 10mm for door numbers and titles, and 7 mm for personal names.
   • Space on each name plate for 3 rows – to include one row of titles at 10mm, and 2 rows of names at 7mm. Additional names are shown on additional signs which are fixed beneath the first one, and have a blank number plate. These additional signs can be provided at either a depth of 55mm (for 3 row of names) or 29mm (for one row). These smaller signs are useful for names of individual staff members where these might change frequently.
   • All name plates to be fixed on doors with the top edge at 1600mm.

Future proposed standard for door signs
The following standard for door signs is proposed, which takes into account features that make the Corporate Image more accessible. Changes from the current standard are shown in bold:

**Standard to be adopted for door signage**
- Separate door numbers (90mm) and names/titles (210mm) within one 300mm length satin silver metal holder, depth of 55mm.
- Matt silver background to door plates with black arial letters/numbers.
- Numbers will be engraved to a depth of 1mm, whilst letters for names/titles/functions will be engraved to a depth of 0.75mm.
- Character size of 15mm for door numbers; 10mm for titles; 10mm for personal names; and 30mm for room functions.
- A mixture of capitals and lower case letters to be used.
- Titles are not to be condensed to fit on one row, as this reduces visibility, and militates against consistency of signage. Instead, longer titles will need to be provided on a separate plate from that used for names.
- Space on each name plate for 2 rows – to include one row of titles at 10mm, and 1 row of names at 10mm. Additional names can be shown on additional plates which are fixed beneath the first one, and have a blank number plate. These additional plates can be provided at either a depth of 55mm (for 2 rows of names) or 29mm (for 1 row). Where room functions are shown rather than names, this will take the form of one row on 55mm deep plates, or on signs which do not have plates.
- All name plates to be fixed on doors with the top edge at 1600mm high, unless the door has either a wooden or glass panel, in which case height of door plates may vary.
- End plates to be provided on signs, as these give a neat appearance.
- Where room functions are student/public general access areas such as toilets, lecture theatres, sports centres, these need to meet BS8300 (see recommendations from Capita Symmonds).

**Features of the new proposals:**

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Size/pitch
Corporate Signs currently use c 30 pitch arial (7mm) for personal names, and c 40 pitch arial (10mm) for titles. Titles and names will be c 40 pitch arial (10mm high). Room numbers (which are currently also 10mm high) will be provided at 15mm high (c 60 pitch arial) in order to improve visibility.

Signs for room functions (eg ‘Meeting Room 1’ would also be at 15mm height. This feature has necessitated the metal holder for door signs to be lengthened from 230mm to 300mm, to accommodate longer room number sections (which need to cater for up to 7 characters in larger buildings). These standards compare well against the minimum requirement of 20 pitch arial for the signs to be accessible.

Tonal contrast
Currently the metal holders and the background colour of the doorsigns is shiny/glossy silver. This has been changed to satin/matt silver, to cut down glare.

The room numbers and names/titles are currently engraved at 0.5mm depth (in black on silver). A deeper engraving gives an improved tonal contrast – it has the appearance of emboldening the letters or numbers, which improves the contrast with the background. It is proposed that room numbers will be engraved at 1mm depth, whilst titles and names or room functions will be engraved at 0.75mm. (The smaller sized letters appear crowded if engraved to a depth of 1mm).

Tactile
There was a suggestion that tactile door numbers might be appropriate. This possibility has been examined but it is not recommended as:
• The size of numbers would have to be increased beyond the current 60 pitch proposed to enable tactile recognition, which would change the ratio of size between the door number and the name plate from the proposed 1:2 to nearer 1:1. This gives the door plates an odd appearance, as the door number takes up nearly as much room as the title/name, and often would leave insufficient room for the title/name unless the door plate is lengthened further, and very long door signs again look odd.

• Embossed door numbers cannot be obtained in the current Corporate Image colours of silver and black, which would necessitate a radical change from the current standard.

• Embossed door numbers could not be produced in-house in large quantities, and so would have to be manufactured externally – adding time and expense to the provision of door signs, which are paid for by Faculties.

• However, BS8300 recommends the use of tactile symbols and these will be used where possible (see Capita Symmonds’ views 1)

Costs and manufacturing
All the proposed new signage can be manufactured in-house, with only minimal cost increases for the larger sized signs proposed (eg the metal holders at 300mm are 5p more than the metal holders at 230mm – cost per item for the smaller version is now £5, though discounts can be obtained on bulk purchase).

Consultation
The following have given their support to these proposals:

[Anonymous], Steven Gilley, [Anonymous], Estate Services

[Anonymous], Equality Unit

Martin Holmes and [Anonymous], Marketing Team

[Anonymous], [Anonymous] (Access Audit Surveyor)

[Anonymous] of the Department of Sociology and Social Policy was also consulted. Whilst he was supportive of the size of text, room numbers, and general appearance, he felt that tonal contrast was not adequate.