

Case Study



UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND

South West Communications Group provides the University of the West of England with a state-of-the-art voice and data system that cost-effectively enhances its service to its students and improves staff productivity.

The University of the West of England (UWE) is a modern, growing university in the thriving city of Bristol. UWE is one of Britain's most popular universities, with more than 30,000 students and 3,000 staff and is the largest provider of higher education in the south west of England. Students come to UWE from across the UK, as well as a significant and growing number of international students from more than 50 countries worldwide.

The university has four campuses in and around Bristol encompassing nine schools covering a wide range of disciplines. In addition, they also have an associate faculty in Gloucestershire and regional centers in Bath, Gloucestershire and Swindon.

The university is continually developing and expanding, with a massive £200 million currently being invested in new facilities.

The challenge

The key driver of this project was to accommodate the telephony needs of a new sports facility on the main Frenchay campus, plus an additional 1,932 student accommodation rooms.

The university was also keen to secure a system that would be capable of providing an additional telephony service to the remainder of the Frenchay, Glenside, St Matthias and Bower Ashton campuses.

It was UWE's aim to select a communications platform capable of supporting its long-term strategy whereby it could be gradually rolled out to the remainder of the university as opportunity and funding permitted, eventually completely replacing the existing system.

With this in mind, it was essential that the chosen solution was able to integrate with the university's legacy telephony service.

The solution

Following a formal tender process, the University of the West of England selected South West Communications Group to deploy an Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX Enterprise communications system to provide the following:

Integrated voice & data network – utilising IP telephony, all of UWE's internal calls between the sports centre and student accommodation were

carried across the data network and were free of charge.

This network is doubly efficient in that it was seamlessly connected to the existing analogue infrastructure paving the way for improvement of internal communications processes throughout the entire university.

Centralised management – was provided to the university's telecommunications team via the Alcatel-Lucent OmniVista 4760 network management platform using a functional Windows-based graphical user interface.

Contact centre – Alcatel-Lucent's Premium Edition multimedia call centre software was used to handle both voice calls and email traffic.

Initially, this was deployed to the IT helpdesk, but it has subsequently been expanded to cover academic and administration departments to handle the high volumes of calls that are received during the clearing admissions period in August.

Unified Communications – the university is currently piloting Alcatel-Lucent's My Instant Communicator that includes the My Messaging and My Teamwork applications that deliver a range of sophisticated tools.

These tools include the ability for voice, email and fax messages to all be left in a single inbox, remote email access via phone using Text-to-Speech capabilities, voice and video conferencing, document sharing and intelligent rich presence that allows staff to instantly see the availability of colleagues.

The university expects to gain overall productivity among its staff using these real-time communications tools, as well as providing a higher standard of support for its students.

The university also expects to compound these benefits with a lower total cost of ownership due to a reduced administrative overhead.

The result

By taking the time to evaluate not just cost implications but also issues with existing internal processes, South West Communications Group has been able to provide UWE with a solution that has already had a significantly positive impact on the way employees and departments interact.

Many end-users recognise there are benefits in using the latest developments in communications technology, but it has been important to show them exactly how the solutions can be tailored to meet their specific needs.

UWE also plans to expand the use of the contact centre software for the clearing period to include the accommodation departments and other individual departments providing full coverage for all users across the entire campus.

Computer telephony will also form a large part of the future of the system. Working closely with South West Communications Group, the university is planning to integrate their student records system and Microsoft Office Communications Server into the Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX Enterprise platform. This will enable the university's staff to view screen pop-ups of student records based upon the caller details thus speeding up the overall efficiency of the student services department.

With significant expertise in assisting educational institutions, South West Communications Group was able to select the ideal products to suit the UWE's day to day operations. They have guided the university through the entire installation process providing regular updates on how it was progressing, working towards the important aim of completion being on time and within budget.

South West Communications Group's support continues well after completion through a support team assigned to assist with any maintenance or service issues, as well as providing further advice on any upgrades or add-ons.

South West Communications Group's helpdesk takes ownership of any faults that may occur with a team of highly skilled engineers on hand to rectify these swiftly and efficiently either remotely or on-site to ensure clients can return to their full working capacity as quickly as possible.

South West Communications Group continues to make great strides within the education sector, providing organisations of all sizes with campus-wide collaborative technology that has a genuine impact on the way they operate, as well as offering a swift return on investment.

Jonathan Barstow, UWE's telecommunications team leader said:

"The introduction of the new facilities marked the perfect opportunity for us to conduct an overhaul of our existing communications infrastructure, and South West Communications Group stood out as being the best equipped to integrate all of the different sites and environments.

"The ease of management offered by the new solution means that staff will be able to spend more time interacting and collaborating with one another in order to complete key tasks."