

CASE STUDY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND BRISTOL

UWE
Bristol
University
of the
West of
England

REQUIREMENT:

Skype for Business and Contact Centre upgrade

THE CLIENT

With around 28,000 students, 3,000 staff, and over 400 courses covering a wide range of subject areas, the University of the West of England (UWE) is the largest provider of higher education in the South West of England. Students visit UWE from across the UK, in addition to a significant and growing number of international students from over 140 countries. It is ranked in the top 20 of UK universities for graduate employability and at its highest ever position in the Guardian League Table, ranking 21st out of 121 UK institutions.

Ranking as one of the top five institutions in the UK for cutting edge research has gained UWE the TEF Gold status in the latest government rankings for higher education providers, which is the highest possible rating in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The University has placed strong emphasis over the years on communication, building close partnerships with businesses and organisations locally, nationally, and internationally. However, building these partnerships relies on successful collaboration, therefore The University of the West of England needed to ensure they had a suitable and reliable Unified Communications solution in place.

Furthermore, recognising that their existing infrastructure that supports the annual Clearing process had caused issues previously, UWE needed to migrate to a Skype for Business platform and refresh their existing Contact Centre build, bringing it in-line with current best practice. After a couple of failed upgrade attempts, Modality stepped in.

As the annual "Clearing" period is a critical time for both the University's income targets and the students seeking a response to their application, a robust and efficient system would be essential in managing this process.

TECHNICAL SOLUTION

Skype for Business and Contact Centre upgrade

Modality built a close working relationship with the IT Operations team at UWE, delivering a project over two phases. The objective was to bring UWE's Skype for Business and Contact Centre estate up to current standards and remove legacy, temporary workarounds.

During the first project phase, Modality built a greenfield, hybrid-enabled Skype for Business solution with high availability and disaster recovery. UWE's 5,000 users were migrated from their legacy Lync 2010 technology onto the new platform and Enterprise Voice was enabled for 3,000 users.

This newly built environment, based on industry best practices, formed the robust foundation for the second project phase; rebuilding UWE's Contact Centre solution for 150 agents, whilst catering to some of their more complex requirements.

Due to the rapport between the teams at Modality and UWE, a project that should have taken five months to complete was reduced to three and resulted in the smooth running of UWE's annual Clearing process for the first time in many years. Modality consultants provided go-live support during the Clearing period but found that they had zero issues to fix!

NAVIGATING THE PANDEMIC

The onset of COVID-19 presented UWE with the challenge of navigating through new ways of working when staff switched to a mixture of remote and on-site operations overnight.

Due to these changes, UWE needed to blend its own technology with the home infrastructure of its workforce. In addition, UWE had the challenge of managing this transition with other vendor technology. The Clearing process required a complex, hybrid-split Contact Centre set-up to smoothly operate wherever staff were based to continue to manage the high volume of enquiries.

Thanks to Modality's contact centre solution and Skype for Business upgrade, staff were able to make the switch to remote working easily despite the challenging circumstances. The Contact Centre integrated seamlessly to enable agents to continue to carry out their roles from home ensuring service to potential students was never disrupted.

The upgrade ultimately enabled UWE to move away from an unreliable, unstable system to a platform that staff and students alike have confidence in and will support the university moving forwards. .

SUCCESS AND ORGANISATION BENEFITS

Following the migration to Skype for Business and Contact Centre upgrade, UWE has benefitted from:

- **Reaching a milestone admissions target** during the first morning of the Clearing period, without any telephony issues – the first time this had happened in over a decade
- **Upskilling of the infrastructure team** at UWE who are now better equipped to maintain the Skype for Business environment moving forward
- **A robust and reliable telephony solution** for 3,000 users across its estate, with a robust Contact Centre solution for 150 agents
- **Proactive monitoring and break-fix support** for the current Skype for Business infrastructure, allowing the in-house team to focus on value-add tasks
- **Seamless ability to work remotely** for all staff, including agents managing the Contact Centre during UWE's busiest Clearing period
- **Future planning support** from Modality experts who are on hand to help devise UWE's future UC roadmap and manage the move to Microsoft Teams

// *Watching our Clearing process take place without a hitch following Modality's upgrade of our infrastructure was a very different experience from the issues we've faced in previous years. Now we can be confident in the knowledge that students and the general public can get in touch with us at a potentially difficult time, allowing them to benefit from the wide range of courses and opportunities we have available for the success of their future.*

Alistair Sandford, IT Operations Director at the University of West England



Wherever you are on your Modern Workplace journey, we'd love to help you.
For more information please contact enquiries@modalitysystems.com

