Case Study

The University of Buckingham embraces hybrid learning and enhances collaboration with tailored Audio Visual Solutions.

The University of Buckingham is a small independent University with around 3000 students, the first campus is spread across three sites in Buckingham and the second is a satellite campus 125 miles away in Crewe. The University sought to improve their hybrid learning capabilities, while providing a seamless teaching experience for students and educators alike.

They partnered with Sharp UK, who took a consultative approach, tailoring Audio Visual Solutions to their specific needs. This approach used technology to bridge the physical distance between the two campuses, connecting educators and students and enhancing learning experiences.

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The challenge
Solutions to create a cohesive learning environment

The University's Schools are divided across two main campuses. This meant the University faced challenges in providing seamless teaching and learning experiences. With the addition of hybrid learning, which educators and students are now adopting, the University was also challenged with delivering a cohesive learning experience in this new landscape. The University sought technology solutions that could overcome geographical barriers, enabling seamless hybrid learning.

During initial consultations, collaboration between the Buckingham and Crewe campuses became a focal point. The University's existing solution was disrupting both learning and teaching experiences, as well as impacting operational efficiency.

Ben Richardson, Senior Operations Officer & Business Analyst at the Crewe Campus said, "We had no system available that allowed us to stream lectures between campuses. This meant all resources would have to be duplicated. For courses that require a lot of contact time and frequent lectures, this essentially doubled the teaching time needed."

An additional challenge the University faced was the prevalence of outdated Audio Visual equipment for teaching. Interactive Displays and Projectors were unreliable, regularly disrupting learning. While a lack of microphones and speakers in lecture halls, meant lecturers and students would have to shout in order to ask questions.

Accessibility and ease of use was also a challenge. Lecturers found existing technology complicated and difficult to operate, frequently requiring technical support. Often technology required the user to remain in a specific place in the room, limiting accessibility.

A full Audio Visual overhaul was necessary to address these challenges. This involved replacing outdated technology with modern and reliable solutions, ensuring that new technology was accesible for all users. The University was seeking to enhance inter-campus collaboration, reduce downtime caused by technical issues, and foster a more cohesive learning environment. These improvements were essential in overcoming the current challenges and achieving the University's objectives of academic excellence and operational efficiency.

The challenge
- Collaboration between geographically dispersed campuses.
- Unreliable, outdated equipment.
- Technology accessibility and ease of use.
- Facilitating effective hybrid learning.
- Achieving objectives of academic excellence and operational efficiency.

The solution
- Tailored suite of Audio Visual solutions to enhance collaboration and communication across all campuses.
- HyFlex learning solution, integrated with Microsoft Teams.

- Interactive Displays offering high resolution visuals and ease-of-use.
- Digital Signage Displays allowing students a constant view of lecture content.
- Teams Room, Projectors, Microphones and Speakers to improve student engagement.

The result
- Enhanced experiences, collaboration and communication across campuses.
- Hybrid learning capabilities across both campuses.
- Bespoke package and installation to meet the university's specific needs.
- Accessible technology without barriers to entry.

The solution
Tailored Audio Visual Solutions

Sharp provided the University of Buckingham with innovative Audio Visual Solutions to enhance collaboration and communication across its campuses. This tailored solution allowed seamless streaming of lectures and seminars, ensuring that students and lecturers can participate in and benefit from lectures in real-time, regardless of their physical location.

Sharp proposed a HyFlex (Hybrid Flexible) learning solution for several of the University's lecture halls. Made up of a One-Touch Meeting Room Solution, high-quality projector system, microphones, speakers and AI tracking cameras to bring students and lecturers together. The solution integrates with Microsoft Teams to offer powerful video conferencing at the touch of a button. With a dedicated touchscreen panel, lecturers no longer need to connect their device to the equipment, making it much simpler to use.

The AI tracking cameras at the back of the room enable lecturers to teach from anywhere in the room, without being confined to one location. While the camera at the front of the room allows students in the lecture hall to ask questions, be seen and heard by everyone watching the lecture in real-time.
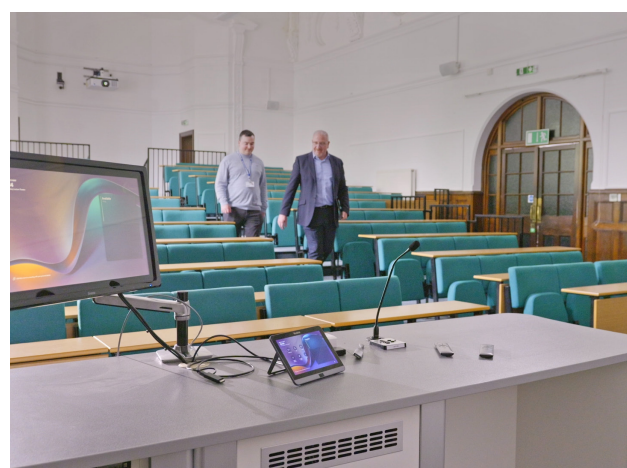
Central to Sharp's solution are the in-classroom Interactive Displays, which offer high-resolution visuals and intuitive ease-of-use. The Interactive Displays are designed to work seamlessly with digital tools, allowing lecturers to annotate and share content with ease. The Interactive Displays also have a built-in PC so that staff can log in without the need for a laptop, drastically reducing the need for technical support.

These displays, paired with Digital Signage Display repeater screens, allow students, no matter where they are in the room, a constant view of the lecture content. This facilitates a more interactive and immersive learning experience, encouraging active participation from all.

The bespoke Moot Court Room solution was designed to prepare students for the practicalities of a career in Law. Aided by Sharp's Audio Visual technology, the University created a court room, allowing students to practise in a realistic court setting to hone in on their debate skills.

"As somebody who uses a wheelchair, this technology is extremely accessible. I know that I can deliver a lecture from my wheelchair, anywhere in the room"

Charley-Anne Gordon-Gardner, Lecturer in Law, University of Buckingham, Buckingham Campus

"It means we have the exact same offering at both Crewe and at Buckingham and it creates a cohesive learning environment"

Benjamin Richardson, Senior Operations Officer and Business Analyst, University of Buckingham, Crewe Campus

The result
An enhanced learning experience for all

The solutions provided by Sharp have transformed experiences for all at the University of Buckingham, enhancing learning and teaching for both students and lecturers alike. The advancements have bridged the physical distance between the campuses and fostered a sense of unity across the University.

One of the most notable results is the cohesive hybrid learning capabilities now available across all campuses. With Sharp's advanced Audio Visual Solutions, students can participate in lectures and collaborate, no matter their location. This has fostered a more inclusive and flexible learning environment, accommodating all students needs and schedules.

Commenting on the new technology, Charley-Anne Gordon-Gardner, Lecturer in Law said "We can have the lecturer in the lecture theatre, but we can also have a different lecturer teaching remotely. Even where lectures are being recorded across two campuses, we still have the ability to ensure that the lectures are entirely interactive."

A key aspect of the successful implementation is the accessibility of the technology. The user-friendly nature of the solutions means that students and lecturers can easily adopt and utilise the new tools without the need for extensive training or technical support. This accessibility has encouraged widespread use of technology into daily academic activities, promoting a more engaging and interactive experience. For Charlie Anne Gordon-Gardener, Lecturer in Law and wheelchair user, the technology has significantly improved her ability to teach. It supports accessibility as the AI tracking cameras focus in on the speaker, meaning lecturers can deliver their lecture from anywhere.

The solutions and installation were tailored to meet the University of Buckingham's specific needs. Sharp's technical experts worked closely with the University to understand their unique requirements and challenges, ensuring that the technology solutions provided were not only state-of-the-art but also perfectly aligned with their objectives. This approach has maximised the effectiveness of the new solutions.

Advanced hybrid learning capabilities, tailored Audio Visual solutions, and accessible technology have collectively contributed to an impressive experience for lecturers and students.
These improvements have not only addressed previous challenges but have also set a new standard for excellence and innovation at the University.

"It's genuinely made my experience as a lecturer, 10 times better"

Charley-Anne Gordon-Gardner, Lecturer in Law, University of Buckingham, Buckingham Campus

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