

4C help the University of Central Lancashire to implement cutting edge student services

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) provides higher education services for approximately 32,000 students at its campus sites in Preston, Penrith and Carlisle. Established in 1992 and employing around 3,000 staff, UCLan is one of the UK's largest universities and offers over 500 undergraduate and 180 post graduate courses to students from all over the UK, and from overseas. The University has recently invested £60 million in a range of campus developments. It also opened the School of Dentistry and the first School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in Lancashire in September 2007.



4C was chosen to offer an independent review of the University's communications

At the forefront of student services

The world of higher education is a competitive one and in order to ensure that it could offer its students high quality services, the University had been considering the provision of telephony and data services for students for some time. However, having been unable to reach agreement with the existing managed service suppliers, this aim had not yet been realised. It was decided that an independent review of the process so far would help to determine the way forward and drive it through to completion.

With their wealth of experience working with HE organisations across the UK to review, and develop telephony strategies, as well as extensive experience in assisting with procurement, 4C was selected to work on the project. The independent consultancy was asked to begin by reviewing the process of providing telephony and data services to the student body. 4C Strategies was also tasked with assessing the feasibility of managing these services in-house.

4C Strategies



A comprehensive review was carried out and the results suggested that it would be best to proceed with a self managed service. Having impressed in the project thus far, 4C was also asked to help manage the procurement and implementation process, bringing together all of the elements required to complete the installation to ensure that it ran as smoothly as possible. The end result was the innovative self managed voice and data service for students that the University had hoped for: a state of the art network of systems serving 1550 student bedrooms in 4 locations.

4C was also involved in the competitive procurement process which was undertaken for second user PBX equipment, voice mail system and pre-paid calling card platforms. As part of their brief, the consultancy drew up detailed specifications to reflect the University's requirements. This also ensured that the different elements of the solution would work together, even when purchased from different suppliers.

Support every step of the way

As a result of the project, the University now has:

- A network which is connected to a server which runs the pre-paid calling card application and is in turn, connected to outbound network services.
- A voicemail application that runs on a separate server providing voicemail to students and an auto attendant service for incoming callers.
- Pre-paid cards which are available in both disposable and rechargeable formats. With the addition of an automated credit card transaction server, students can now top up their rechargeable cards at any time of the day or night.
- A University data network which can be accessed by students via an ISP of their choice, simplifying the management of this aspect of the service in accordance with the University's original strategy.

Timescales were tight on the project as UCLan needed the services to be up and running for the start of the academic year. With the input from 4C, all the elements were procured and installed by the autumn deadline.

The whole project took 12 months from inception through to procurement and installation. 4C was there every step of the way, and according to the University staff involved, the consultancy was integral to its smooth running and success. "4C has been responsive to our requirements. We have always been pleased with their support during the project," commented George Ashton, Head of Networks at UCLan.

To find out how you can make more of your communications by having a clear strategy in place, contact 4C to arrange for an initial no-obligation fact finding consultation. **Visit our website www.4c.co.uk, call 01858 438 938 or email office@4c.co.uk.**

4C Strategies

