

CASE STUDY

# UNIVERSITY OF KENT

Agility, flexibility and contingency planning ensured another smooth and successful Clearing period for University of Kent.



 Britannic

## Strong Clearing makes positive impact

Clearing is the busiest and financially most important time for any university. The service relies upon the availability of robust communications platforms. Clearing was a very smooth and successful virtual event for University of Kent using Britannic's Clearance Readiness Service alongside great teamwork, planning and trust. During Clearing 2022 over 10000 calls were taken over a two-week period, an increase of 4000 on the previous year.

## Clearing readiness service

Clearing is now almost an entirely virtual process. The pandemic has sped up the rate of transformation of processes and services with the positive outcome that Clearing can now take place from anywhere, safe in the knowledge that data and systems are secure and robust, but equally flexible and agile.

The demand for places during Clearing surges when A-level results are released. For anyone with responsibility for telecommunications in a university the focal point of their year is ensuring that the Clearing process runs as efficiently as possible.

Kent gears up for Clearing in February with testing commencing in April. They take advantage of Britannic's Clearing Readiness Service which provides extensive SIP load testing and failover testing in advance along with on-site support on the day, adding further reassurance.

A wide number of contingencies were put in place to ensure smooth delivery but were not needed as all went according to plan.



## Expertise and intuitive systems simplify Clearing

Kent has been helped by Britannic's considerable knowledge of the higher education sector and their willingness to participate in operational group meetings regarding Clearing. This expertise was helpful in guiding Kent in their implementation of a secondary communications platform for Clearing and back up.

Kent trains volunteers from across the University to help, whether offer-making, staffing the Hotline or making calls to students, so the system needs to be intuitive and easy to use to keep training costs of non-technical users such as academic staff to a minimum. Clearing offer making was immediate and well-managed by a central team with follow-up calls being made by academics and confirmation taking place online.

## The numbers

No. staff

3k

No. students

19k

No. involved in Clearing

256

123 agents  
133 academics making offers

### Cloud telephony

The threat of ransomware had raised its head in universities in 2021. A cyber-attack could have a major impact on operations at Kent. Britannic made several recommendations to overcome these issues. It was agreed that 8x8 unified communications (UCaaS) and contact centre (CCaaS) platforms would be ideal as a backup service.

### Fast implementation

The decision to move ahead was made very quickly. Planning started in June 2021 and the system was in place in July to support outbound Clearing calls. It all happened very smoothly due to the forward planning and well documented onboarding process.

### Licence flexibility

One feature that has been very useful to Kent has been the flexibility of licencing. Licence numbers can be ramped up or scaled back with only a 2-month commitment, ideal for a Clearing environment when it's all hands on deck for a very short period.



**“NETX2 IS BRILLIANT. IT GIVES ME ALL THE CONTROL I NEED TO ROUTE CALLS** by location, time, day shift pattern and so much more. Britannic has a great feedback mechanism, and the product undergoes continuous development.”

**Richard Charley,**  
Telecoms Manager, University of Kent

## Call quality

The 8x8 system was used to make the outbound offers calls. Academics based across the globe from India to Italy and beyond used softphones to make offers to students around the world. The call quality was excellent at 93%. 8884 offers were made, bringing them up to capacity.

## Smart routing

If a student was not available to take the call, a return inbound call would come to the academic, but if they were not available the call would then be routed to the Clearing Hotline to ensure that a student didn't miss out on an offer.

## The economics of Clearing

Competition is fierce amongst both students and universities. A student has an average worth of £27,000 per year to a university, with international students providing a net economic benefit of £25.9 billion to the UK. 88% of the callers who called Clearing at the University of Kent were handled, which hopefully increased their offer rate, making a significant impact on this year's revenues. It is therefore clear that a robust and integrated solution is crucial for handling Clearing traffic.

## Customer service economics

There can be no doubt that short wait times, well managed queues and empowered agents make a big difference to the economics of Clearing. The quality of the experience and the ability to get through to Kent before moving on to another university has a significant economic impact, so getting the communications platform right in advance cannot be underestimated.

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