



LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

WEST PARK

TEACHING HUB

CASE STUDY

Loughborough University expands estate of high quality, flexible learning spaces on West Park campus

Ford College is a large, mainly open-plan building, situated on West Park campus and previously rented out to a third party business. At the end of 2015, Loughborough University took back the building to create the West Park Teaching Hub, a new set of learning spaces intended to enhance the quality and variety of teaching rooms and informal work areas available within the West Park area of campus.

Following a competitive tender, Loughborough selected Pure AV to design and install audio visual systems for deployment in the newly created Hub. The development includes four, tiered lecture theatres, four flat teaching rooms, an informal learning space and digital signage throughout.

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AARON TURLINGTON-SMITH
Teaching Support Manager
Loughborough University

A VARIETY OF SPACES FOR A RANGE OF TEACHING STYLES

During consultation with academics, it became clear that the teaching spaces should accommodate both collaborative and more traditional teaching styles. A mix of flat plate teaching rooms with collaborative furniture and traditionally tiered lecture theatres provides Timetabling Services with the ability to offer lecturers a choice of room type. The academic teaching staff now able to select the room environment best suited to their purpose and preferred style of delivery.

A FAMILIAR WORK ENVIRONMENT

A core aspect of the audio visual design is the delivery of a consistent end-user experience so that regardless of the room type or location on campus, the audio visual technology and user interface encountered by academic room users is familiar. To achieve this, the University has established a standardised approach to equipment selection and programming.

The standard room set-up includes Extron touch screens and control, Panasonic projection and displays, Wolfvision visualisers, Teammate lecterns and Echo 360 lecture capture. Teaching support manager at Loughborough University, Aaron Turlington-Smith explained, "It is important to create a familiar environment for the academic staff, they want to concentrate on lesson delivery free from anxiety about the technology they will have to use. This approach with the integration and programming completed by Pure AV has allowed us to create an effective teaching environment and offer academics the added comfort of a familiar interface for room usage".

EASY MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

As well as providing a standardised user experience, the Extron touch screen and control is integrated with Extron GVE, allowing the University Support Team to remotely monitor and manage the teaching spaces both within West Park and across campus. Standardisation on manufacturers also allows the support services team to hold spares of key equipment items; speeding up response times in case of equipment failure.



INFORMAL SPACES ENCOURAGE ON-GOING STUDY

A further objective of the West Park project was to increase the amount of informal learning spaces available to students. Caroline Pepper, learning environments manager, explained, *"Prior to the introduction of the West Park Teaching Hub we had students walking considerable distances between lectures to find suitable areas for informal study and group work. Within West Park we have informal study areas adjacent to the formal teaching spaces so that when students filter out from timetabled lectures they have a comfortable area, equipped with collaborative furniture where they can continue with conversations and engage in group work activity"*.

A FLEXIBLE AREA FOR EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS

The teaching spaces have also been designed to allow two of the flat plate rooms to be combined to create one large exhibition space. The audio visual equipment within these rooms is constructed so that the lecterns (Teammate Trainer Pros) can be removed and audio managed to produce optimum sound intelligibility and performance whether in standalone teaching mode or combined exhibition mode. The four Panasonic projectors can also be combined to show duplicated images when set up for exhibition. The performance and reliability of the Panasonic projectors a key factor in the University's decision to specify them across the campus estate.

A SUCCESSFUL DEPLOYMENT

The feedback from both students and academics on the facilities within the West Park Teaching Hub has been extremely positive. The post occupancy evaluation of the building completed by Caroline Pepper and her team revealing significant improvements in ratings of the facilities by both academics and students. The evidence from the qualitative feedback particularly positive about the consolidation of both formal and informal spaces within the one area.

The project itself was deployed without issue and delivered by the team at Pure AV ahead of schedule. From the point of view of project deployment, Aaron Turlington-Smith had this to say, *"The project delivery at West Park Teaching Hub was fantastic. Communication (with Pure AV) was great throughout the project. Since the building opened 18 months ago, feedback from end users has been great and the equipment has performed as envisaged, with no issues whatsoever"*.

