

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE CAREERS SERVICE

MEET &
ENGAGE

THE LANDSCAPE



The University of Bedfordshire Careers and Employability Service have offices on two of the five campuses, Luton and Bedford – in total supporting over 15,000 students. The Service offer three core methods for student engagement; a daily drop-in, bookable guidance appointments and e-guidance for specific employability issues (e.g. CV review). In addition, the Recruitment Services Team work to connect employers and students through a range of events and initiatives.

The Careers and Employability Service also provide a unique lifetime support guarantee to students, enabling them to come back at any point post-graduation to access advice and guidance.

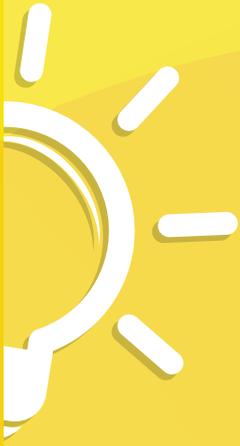
THE CHALLENGES



Apart from Luton and Bedford, other campuses include Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Putteridge Bury with a number of partner colleges in the UK and overseas. With a wide spread of teaching locations, the increase in students commuting to study and the lifetime guarantee of support, it can be a challenge for students to access guidance.

One initiative for current students sees the Careers team travelling to various locations, holding pop-up style events, where students can drop-in – this works well to discuss immediate issues and promote on-going solutions, such as e-guidance. However, this has its limitations and does not provide easy access for the University's alumni audience.

THE SOLUTION



A key innovation has been the implementation of the Meet & Engage platform and in particular the 121 chat functionality. The daily digital drop-in sessions have been heavily promoted and enable users, regardless of geography, to tap into the expertise of the Service.

Using the Meet & Engage live group chats, students have been offered the chance to develop skills and plan for key events, for instance a pre-event planning workshop before a careers fair. This group format, scheduled for a specific time-slot, means that students can simply log on and gain valuable advice from the team. The nature of the group chat means that participants can see peer questions and the answers provided by the team, so they can expand their understanding.

THE RESULT

The University of Bedfordshire has a large widening participation cohort with a number of students with caring responsibilities outside of their university life. The live chat has shown to be an invaluable way to offer a support mechanism to students who are not able to come in face-to-face outside of lecture times.

The Careers team have also noticed that they are attracting a different type of student via the digital drop-in sessions, who might otherwise have felt intimidated or who might have lacked confidence in visiting the Careers Service in person.

WHAT THE CLIENT SAYS

**Michelle Everitt,
Acting Head of Careers**

“ Using Meet & Engage has allowed us to open up our services so they are far more accessible to all our students and alumni. The fact someone can log on and quickly ask the team a question without the need to book an appointment is hugely beneficial.

Looking forward, the team are keen to use Meet & Engage in more diverse ways to continue to focus on providing an engaging and accessible service. As well as using the technology to support and upskill groups of students, it will also be a valuable tool to connect employers with students in terms of pre- and post-event engagement and to build upon the work we do within schools and colleges in the local community. ”