

CASE STUDY:

University of Edinburgh

Choosing a cutting-edge lecture capture solution for the future

Overview

It has been said that, rather than tinkering in the side-lines of what you are already doing, true innovation comes from tying together different ideas to create something completely transformational.

At The University of Edinburgh, generating tangible value for students from new opportunities is the beating heart behind its world-leading success. So, fuelled by increasing student demand for lecture recording and determined to accelerate positive change, the university undertook a radically different procurement journey than that which it had done in the past.

The final destination was a single, smart video platform solution – Echo360.

Leading the way

The university’s procurement process has always been subject to stringent high quality controls but, this time, the team decided to use an approach that is unusual for higher education.

“We decided to use competitive dialogue for the tender process,” explains Colin Forrest, Project Manager for The University of Edinburgh’s Information Services Group. “There was a huge amount of fact finding to be done and we knew that standard procurement processes would not enable us to drive down into the details of a potential supplier’s solutions and services or the proposed business model.

“We were looking for a progressive, long-term partnership, so we wanted to get beyond the superficial as quickly as possible. We also had a very tight time schedule, with a target of less than twelve months to get up and running.”

Clarity from the beginning

The first step was evaluating ten potential suppliers against a comprehensive list of mandatory requirements. “With competitive dialogue, we needed to be absolutely transparent about the whole process from the start,” says Colin. “To meet our deadline, we could only take three companies through the full process and Echo360 was successful in gaining a place in the final three.

“Each company was separately invited on site three times. We ensured the day had exactly the same structure, with suppliers meeting exactly the same people within the university, including the same student representative.”

FAST FACTS

- **A comprehensive video management solution**
Lecture capture and active learning capability to fully engage students and improve learning outcomes.
- **Answers student-led demand**
50% of students have logged in within six months, despite the fact that less than half of lecture rooms had Echo360 installed at the time.
- **Long-term partnership**
Building a close and collaborative relationship between Edinburgh University and Echo360 during the tender process has ensured a well-defined, state-of-the-art and future-proof system for a world-class university.



Competitive Dialogue

The University of Edinburgh chose to use an OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) competitive dialogue procurement method. This allows full discussions with prospective suppliers on key areas, ensuring the capability to develop solutions that meet student needs as well as securing long-term, flourishing relationships with the university.



The key differentiators

Meetings with suppliers covered a range of topics in extensive detail. “Discussions were focussed on the subjects that were important to us, including how the solution would impact the student experience, accessibility, technical questions and the company’s ability to meet our time frame.

“These conversations proved critical in allowing us to refine the factors that were most important for both the solution and the potential partnership. Interestingly, some requirements that had been regarded as mission-critical, such as security, control of access and VLE integration, turned out not to be particularly big differentiators between the three remaining companies.

“On the other hand, there was a huge variation when it came to aspects such as innovation and the capacity to support teaching and learning. In fact, it was here that Echo360’s offering really set them apart from the other suppliers.”

A long-term partnership

Echo360 offers a comprehensive video management solution with lecture capture and active learning capability to fully engage students and improve learning outcomes. In addition to this, what really stood out to the University of Edinburgh was Echo360’s attitude to creating a lasting partnership.

“We were impressed with the personnel that came to the university, and their willingness to commit to a long-term collaboration. They presented an excellent and innovative roadmap, which highlighted their accountability in supporting us and maintaining the system.

“There was a real sense that the Echo360 team understood our requirements well. Plus, the solution offered exceptional student experiences, such as a live Q & A feature and study guides, at a fair price.”

A success story

Six months after implementation, the university is delighted with the results. “Figures suggest that more than 50% of students have already logged onto Echo360, which is amazing when you consider that we have only installed it in 138 rooms so far, out of an anticipated 300 by the end of this academic year.

“It’s reliability and ease of use has encouraged a positive narrative around the new system and we’re excited about the impact this will have on student satisfaction.”

Using competitive dialogue was a huge jumpstart to the project. “It was the only way we could have completed everything, including implementation, internal communication and training, within our deadline. We are so happy with the outcome, in fact, that two other teams in the university have now gone on to use this procurement model.

“It was a chance to build a really close and effective partnership with Echo360 and this had a big impact on a smooth and timely implementation. We entered the process knowing that we were looking for an innovative supplier we could work with for the long-term. That’s exactly what we got.”