



CASE STUDY

Arden University Provides the Right Schedule for Everyone

Timetables that reach and support new learners. Arden University deploys Semestry smart scheduling solutions.

Arden University has a proud heritage of providing flexible and accessible higher education. With study centres across the UK in Manchester, Birmingham, London, and Leeds, as well as in Berlin, Germany, Arden University provides hybrid academic excellence.

Using blended learning, they give their students the best of both worlds: a mix of face-to-face teaching combined with high-quality digital content and online learning tools. And they do so with the flexibility and certainty that their learners need to balance study with busy work, carer, and family commitments. As a result, Arden's student growth is the fastest in the UK.

Chancellor, Carl Lygo, is recognised as one of the most influential people in UK Higher Education. Lygo comes from just the type of background that Arden aims to reach, bringing a true sense of what higher education can do to the Executive team.

As well as a strong UK presence, Arden operates in Europe from their Berlin campus, as well as in Pakistan and the UAE. And they are always considering more locations to benefit learners. Arden does all of this while ensuring the principle of continuous improvement of staff and student experiences.

<https://semestry.com/>



Stats

- 8 UK study centres
- #1 Vocational Education Provider of the Year 2022
- 23,000+ students studying globally.

Challenge

Complexities associated to Arden's unique flexible learning style.

Solution

TermTime, ExamTime and MyTimetable.

Meeting the challenge

Collaborations between Arden's team of expert timetablers and Semestry solutions will produce the highest learning centrality possible, delivering the right timetables for students.



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Knowing the Challenges; Identifying a Solution

“Arden selected Semestry in order to be able to deal with the complexity of an academic offering that is tailored to Arden’s unique blend of higher-education options that enable easy access for learners from all backgrounds and life situations,” said Paula Reilly, Director of Academic Services at Arden University, “the University needed to manage the complexity and yet establish an operating model that can cope with such rapid growth and success” continues Paula.

Arden students break down stereotypes. They are often time-constrained and for many students English is their second language, juggling families, careers, and caring roles. Timetables have to fit around these lifestyles.

Some of Arden’s responsiveness may sound simple, such as committing to the same time and date for a learner’s classes for an entire academic year. Organisationally, however, the impacts are profound: more operational flexibility, greater levels of academic sourcing, and a responsive bench of staff ready to cover for the unforeseen.

There’s more to come, too, as Arden continues their drive to provide even more flexibility to other parts of the academic offer. By providing students with study timings and certainty about their schedules, the Arden team removes unnecessary barriers to learning. Arden is bringing the potential of university education to new communities of learners while revolutionising the traditional university model in terms of access and reach.

Changing Student System; Introducing a Scheduling Solution

The University is already deploying the UK market leading SITS: Vision student management system from Tribal Group. The implementation is going faster than in many traditional institutions, with the Arden staff team a big part of that success. Flexibility, an openness to new practices that bring value or improvements, and a readiness to make decisions are helping the institution speed through the implementation phases.

With confidence building across the milestones the student teams are achieving, the University decided to bring forward the scheduling project. As well as meeting the challenges for timetabling, the Arden team looked to achieve a consistent approach to creating timetables to all of the systems that need this information and publishing directly to all staff and students.

Focusing on a best-of-breed and modern scheduling solution, Arden has selected Semestry’s TermTime and MyTimetable solutions. Semestry is an operating company of Tribal Group Plc. Importantly for the University, Semestry’s consultants are practitioners, with experienced backgrounds in scheduling across education sectors in the UK and internationally.

Harnessing Success Culture

A “can-do” attitude perpetuates and is infectious at Arden. Growth creates scaling challenges. Scaling creates career opportunities for staff and for new joiners. Through the progressive culture Arden is managing to support change and maintain quality at the university.

The university projects a feeling that they know their rate of change is much higher than others in the more traditional sector. The culture of Arden University is to move forward. They are doers and are growing fast.

Institutional memory has played an important part as well. There are proven planning processes and structures in place, but the environment is fast-paced. The academic and administrative staff seek real clarity on changes needed so that they can execute with confidence.



Achieving with Semestry

“Our goal is a digital-first overlay to everything we do. We are achieving this with the Semestry MyTimetable publication solution,” said Emma Ieda-Smith, Manager of the newly-formed Central Timetabling Team, “and our team of expert timetablers now collaborate using Semestry TermTime with stakeholders across the entire academic community to produce the highest learner-centricity we can in delivering the right timetables for students.”

Arden gathers and manages complex data inputs using Semestry’s TermTime solution, such as student intake module choices, as well as the needs of a curriculum designed around new modes of continuous assessment. With a small but growing team of expert staff in their Coventry HQ, TermTime helps them to transform the gathered data into activities and to automate routine scheduling tasks, leaving the team to focus on activities that need additional decision-making. “The operating model for our scheduling operations is now tested and proven,” notes Emma, “and has been invaluable in supporting our multiple centres and in allowing us to operate internationally.”

“We are not done with personalisation and being able to further tailor how we support individual learners,” continues Paula. “As we build operational excellence, we also establish the foundations to tackle further levels of flexibility and wider preferences, unlocking higher education to many more potential students”.

With growth comes scrutiny, from students and from regulators. So the bar is set beyond a metric of simply meeting quality measures. As a digital-first university, this means enabling students to succeed within the digital environment with support from convenient student centres in the built environment.

During the pandemic, it was a easy to switch to online learning. The university had already fully integrated technology into its curriculum and programs, and student learning continued largely uninterrupted from challenges that plagued much of education globally.



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PAULA REILLY

Director of Academic Services, Arden University

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