

Nottingham Trent University Winner – space efficiency Continuous Utilisation Survey

NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Profile

- HE (some FE)
- 24,000 FTE students
- 2500 staff FTE
- Urban/Rural
- 87 (non-residential) buildings on 3 sites

Summary

Commencing in April 2010, the survey gives an invaluable insight into the use of the NTU estate, recording the utilisation of over 300 rooms every hour.

The resulting analysis has been used to inform decisions on future development, quantify demand for different types of space and for academic planning.

Project partners

NTU: Estates, Information Systems, Directorate, Academic Office, Academic Colleges.

The problem

While a two week snapshot survey has been conducted at NTU for many years, comprehensive information on the actual day to day utilisation of the estate was not available. Information was required regarding changing patterns throughout each term and across the academic year.

Also, although 'planned' utilisation reports were produced, there was limited data available to analyse attendance of bookings, 'empty when observed' events and rooms used for self directed learning such as IT rooms, key to a quality student experience.

The approach

To gain a thorough understanding of room use at NTU, all 'general purpose' teaching rooms, IT and Lecture Theatres, along with a representative sample of 'restricted' space is surveyed each hour Monday – Friday.

The process of data capture and analysis is streamlined by the use of iPad's and Dropbox, mitigating the need for manual data entry of over 15,000 observations each week.

Comprehensive reports are provided each week to Colleges and departments detailing Utilisation, observed attendance of bookings and 'empty when observed' rates. Colleges use the information to work with the academic community to improve attendance rates.

Our goals

1. Develop a detailed view of utilisation allowing an understanding of actual demand, rather than theoretical requirements.
2. Provide efficient and effective space in line with demand, ensuring students receive a quality experience.
3. Ensure room bookings are used, freeing up space for other users where bookings are no longer needed.
4. Work with Schools and Colleges to understand and improve use of rooms.
5. Provide comprehensive information for use in strategic planning, to assist in meeting HEFCE carbon reduction targets.

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Tel : 01242 714321, info@eauc.org.uk, www.eauc.org.uk

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Obstacles and solutions

Obstacle	Solution
Efficient data capture	Use of iPad's and Dropbox to streamline data capture and analysis.
University wide engagement	Top level support for survey from Directorate and engagement with Colleges.
Meaningful analysis	Analysis produced at different levels – from university wide to individual rooms or bookings, allowing targeted use of data.
Robust data	QA checks performed on people capturing the data to ensure data quality.

Performance and results

- Utilisation across all three campuses has improved in 2011/12 when compared to the preceding year.
- Information from the survey has been used to inform the planned regeneration of the Clifton campus, where around 570m² of inefficient teaching space has been closed, with further reductions planned for the future.
- Evening results are being used to align building opening times with demand, offering potential energy savings.
- Following the success of the survey, it has been extended to include data on the type of activity taking place in rooms and to staff office space, to further inform the development of the estate.

Lessons learned

It is essential to gain engagement from all areas of the university when conducting a survey of this kind. This was achieved at NTU with the support of the Directorate. We have worked with the Colleges to ensure we provide meaningful data that they can use. This means the survey is useful for all areas of the university and is seen as a positive activity, rather than an 'enforcement' check.

The survey demands a considerable amount of staff time in planning, supervising and analysis. Sufficient resource is key to ensuring the survey is a success.

Further information

For further information regarding the survey, contact:

Ian Martin, Space Planning Officer, Estates Space Planning, Estates and Resources, Nottingham Trent University,
Burton Street, Nottingham, NG1 4BU

Tel: 0115 8482933

Email: ian.martin@ntu.ac.uk

Registered Office : EAUC UK Office, University of Gloucestershire, The Park, Cheltenham, GL50 2RH
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