



The University of Exeter

Sophisticated yet simple solutions to protect health and safety

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The University of Exeter, located in the South West of England, recently remodelled their engineering workshop within the Harrison Building to support the delivery of engineering education for the future – ensuring students have access to the best possible facilities.

“Gallagher’s powerful software allowed us to create a competency hierarchy to limit machine access that is both sophisticated and yet easy to operate.”

Adam Cowling – Scutum West Systems Design Engineer

The updated facility mimics what students will find in many modern industrial settings with state-of-the-art, multi-functional equipment – including semi-automated milling machines, lathes, guillotines, and bandsaws. The workshop also includes a new, fully equipped vehicle assembly area to support Formula Student, where students can design and build a race car and compete nationally with other university teams.

Safety first

The University required an easy-to-use system that would allow access to the machines based on the competency of the user, ensuring they could only be operated by students who had received adequate training. Not only did they need to ensure users had the correct competencies to start the machine, but they also needed a means of isolating the machine after use to ensure the safety of others in the facility.

Gallagher Certified Channel Partner, Scutum West, worked with Gallagher to implement an access control solution that restricts machine access to only those students trained to operate them. Gallagher T12 Readers and MIFARE card hold slots were installed at

each machine, requiring students to badge their access card at the reader before placing it in the holder to activate the machine. The solution utilises Gallagher’s competency function, which aids in the safety of the cardholder with access to specific areas or machinery restricted to only those who meet defined criteria.

Scutum West Systems Design Engineer, Adam Cowling, explains: “When a student presents their card at the reader, Gallagher Command Centre grants or denies access to the machine based on whether the student has the correct competencies recorded. The machine is activated when a valid card is presented and inserted into the MIFARE card slot, and will remain operational until the card is removed.”

Once the card is removed from the card holder slot, the machine becomes inoperable. This reduces the risk of a machine being left in an operable state, by removing the need for a user to badge at the reader a second time to log off after use.

Complete oversight of activity

The system offers the University complete oversight of who is operating the machines. A large AV screen in the workshop assists staff to see which machines are operational in real time. The Site Plans functionality within Command Centre provides a visual representation of all machines plotted onto the room layout. Coloured icons give an indication of machines status – red for inactive and green for active.

The reporting functionality within Command Centre provides the ability to easily produce an audit trail of machine use, if required.

Intelligent, yet simple

The flexibility of the Gallagher Controller 6000 – the intelligent and powerful interface that sits between the Command Centre server and access control hardware – combined with input and output boards, created a simple process for Scutum to wire the solution from a single point to each of the machine locations.

Adam adds: “Gallagher’s powerful software allowed us to create a competency hierarchy to limit machine access that is both sophisticated and yet easy to operate.”

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