Located in the buzzing heart of England’s capital city, University College London is one of the top ranking establishments for higher education in the world. Founded in 1826, London’s first university institution, the College now has an estimated 28,600 enrolled students and 14,600 members of staff. Including agency staff, academic associates, and other visitors, UCL currently has a system of over 48,000 valid cardholders.

Based primarily in the Bloomsbury area, UCL’s main campus is situated on Gower Street and includes departments such as biology, chemistry, economics, engineering, geography, history, languages, mathematics, philosophy, politics, physics, architecture and the Slade School of Fine Art, as well as the preclinical facilities of the UCL Medical School and the London Centre for Nanotechnology. While the UCL Cancer Institute and Faculty of Laws are also nearby, notable College buildings include the original Wilkins Building and Gower Street’s Cruciform Building, previously home to University College Hospital.

The University has 101 buildings on the Gallagher system, which controls 939 doors, 32 turnstiles and 15 lifts.

The University has further sites based elsewhere in and around London, such as the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology, the UCL Institute of Orthopaedics and Musculoskeletal Science, The Royal Free Hospital Medical School, and also the UK’s largest university-based space research group, the Mullard Space Science Laboratory, and UCL’s own astronomical observatory at Mill Hill.

Due to its position within London and the historical nature of its buildings, UCL has been used as a location for a number of high profile film and television productions, including Gladiator, The Mummy Returns, The Dark Knight and Inception.

The sheer scale of the University’s operations, with thousands of occupants fluctuating between its numerous facilities, has dictated the need for a comprehensive electronic access control security system – one which has evolved over many years.

UCL’s Security Systems Manager, Mike Dawe explains that while adhering to the University’s culture of ‘general openness’ on campus, Gallagher systems have been introduced as “a progressive response to the need for more security control on site.”

Security throughout the University is managed by the Security Department of the Estates Division, which has responsibility for all the physical locking controls and electronic systems, as well as the provision of the security guarding service. By and large an open campus, a number of university buildings are free to visitors from the general public, while others are controlled by turnstiles accessible by valid cardholders only.

Many other research areas are available only to those with specific security passes.

Gallagher’s systems have been in place with the University since 1993 and were originally chosen for the Gallagher Commander Hardware’s ability to communicate effectively over long distances between buildings.

Fast facts

Industry: Education
Business type: University
No. of doors: 939
No. of cardholders: 48,000

Key industry challenges

• Ensuring appropriate access to students/staff onsite
• Implementation of lockdown and evacuation procedures
• Controlling access to key University areas
• Protecting University property
• Providing unobtrusive but robust security
• Control and management of multiple systems
• Visitor time and access management

Gallagher security products installed

Command Centre v7.10, Controllers, MIFARE® card technology, T Series Readers, Prox Plus PIN Readers, Biometric Readers and Remote Arming Terminals.
“UCL is a constantly growing and evolving organisation, with many new building projects currently underway. As UCL’s estate grows rapidly, the Gallagher system remains a key component of its security response, and in the measures deployed in new buildings.”

The Gallagher technology is also used to automatically send barcode information to the Library systems and update the student records system with student photos.

Scheduled email notification reports are also sent regularly which, according to Mike, “has proved very useful for UCL’s high value areas.”

“We routinely use reports and produce these in response to departmental concerns and requests,” he explains.

“Typically this is done by the security operations team, which analyses the information, along with CCTV data to investigate suspected crimes.”

UCL is planning to integrate the Gallagher Security system with its existing CCTV system and will use this, in addition to the new Command Centre Premier client, to improve the provision of site information to the Security Control room staff. The University is also currently developing its import/export process to automatically provide access levels based on person-type information, such as department, course etc.

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