

1.- The Client

City, University of London is a leading UK university, dedicated to transforming the lives of students, creating new knowledge, supporting business and the professions, and contributing to the global good of society.

They currently have over 18,000 students and, as part of their 2026 plan, aim to improve the quality of the student experience and achieve growth in student numbers.



2.- The Requirement

City, University of London approached CallCare to assist them in creating a simulation of managing calls during the UCAS clearing process.

In order to complete this simulation, City, University of London required approximately 1000 calls to be made into their switchboard across a 2½ hour period.

However, unlike many switchboard simulations which simply use computers to simulate the volume of calls, City, University of London required actual people to make the calls and simulate a potential student enquiring as to studying with the university.

In addition to this, City, University of London also required their eventual provider to help and advise their own in-house telecoms team as to how to most effectively manage such a large volume of inbound calls in a short space of time.



What is clearing?

Clearing is part of the university application process in which, after receiving their results, potential students try and find places on courses.

This happens either because they didn't receive the grades they anticipated (so need to find a new course) or they received better grades than anticipated and can explore other options outside of those courses that originally made offers to them.



Clearing is an incredibly important time for City, University of London as not only will they receive a high volume of calls in a short space of time, but the calls are incredibly important to the students making them, so it is vital that the service City, University of London provides is effective.

3. - CallCare's Proposed Solution



Based on City, University of London's requirements, CallCare proposed a solution in which we would assemble enough call operatives to perform a simulation.

This would mean making a target of 1000 calls to City, University of London over a 2½ hour period.

In addition to this, the operatives making the calls would be required to provide feedback on the experience they received, providing City, University of London with

vital information as to the quality of experience the potential students would receive on clearing day.

To ensure the process would run as smoothly as possible, CallCare would provide assistance from their in-house IT team to ensure seamlessness and compatibility between the various softwares in use on both sides.

CallCare would also liaise with staff at City, University of London both prior to the simulation and afterwards to help train and guide City, University of London on the most effective ways to manage high call volume over a short period.

4.- Recruitment and Training

The first step to creating City, University of London's simulation was finding 50 operators to be available for a single 2½ hour period to make the calls.

At CallCare we have over 300 operators, however many of these would be required to take the calls coming in from our other clients.

In addition to incentivising some staff to work an additional shift to take part in the simulation, we ran a flash recruitment drive to find temporary staff to make the calls. This was done by leveraging existing staff's social networks, and through a highly targeted advertising campaign.

Temporary staff were invited to join us for the day, providing us with ample time to train them to make the calls to a high standard - ensuring the simulation would be effective for the client.

In addition to the recruitment drive, we also began liaising with the team at City, University of London to devise exactly how the simulation would run, and different strategies they could implement to manage the high call volume.

CallCare at this point also planned disaster recovery measures to make sure the simulation could go ahead even in the event of technical failures.

5.- Conducting the Simulation

During the simulation itself, we were able to make 991 calls into the City, University of London team.

The operators making the calls followed scripts we devised in conjunction with City, University of London, that not only replicated the basic data students would be providing on the day of clearing, but also provided our operators with stage directions such as "sound confused" or "sound busy" in order to give the City,

University of London staff an accurate and immersive simulation of what things would be like on clearing day.

Our in-house IT team made the scripts open on our operators screens automatically. This made sure the process ran as smoothly as possible, and that the maximum number of calls could be made during the limited time period.



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Additionally, while the calls were being made, City, University of London ran drills of their disaster recovery procedures to make sure they would be effective if required on clearing day.

6.- Feedback and Debriefing

After the simulation was complete, CallCare was able to analyse the data and provide valuable feedback to the City, University of London team.

The feedback we provided included average call length, call transfer times, and even gradings for each of City, University of London's operators based on the experience of the CallCare member making the call.

This is valuable user journey information which City, University of London will be able to use to optimise the experience for anyone calling in on clearing day.

7.- The Outcome

As a result of the simulation we created for City, University of London, the university's telecoms department is now better prepared for clearing day, and to ensure the best user experience for the students applying with them.

In addition to this, we were able to provide City, University of London with detailed feedback about the performance of individual operators, and we gave them the opportunity to test disaster recovery protocols to ensure they would be effective if required on clearing day.

By utilising real people to make the calls rather than simply testing the switchboard performance via an automated solution, we were able to create a valuable test of the user journey as well as the performance of the switchboard itself.

City, University of London were very happy with the simulation and the additional feedback provided by CallCare. Thanks to the service we provided they were fully prepared for clearing.



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8.- City, University of London say...

"CALLCARE were committed, organised and communicative, from the outset of the project.

The service they provided in advance and during our simulation exercise was the single most important reason why we could approach Clearing (a business critical time) with the confidence we need that our systems, processes and people were fit for purpose.

I would wholeheartedly recommend other institutions using their services."

Dominic Davis (Head of Admissions)

9.- Get In Touch

If you are interested in a similar service to test the performance of your internal telecoms, or any other bespoke package of outsourced call handling, visit www.callcare247.com or contact us on 0345 055 8444.



Some of our team who made the calls



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