

Case Study

City University

Premium Support: faster fixes, value for money

Founded in 1894, City University London's main campus is based in Islington. With over 18,000 students, the University comprises five schools with around 40 different academic departments and centres.



CITY UNIVERSITY
LONDON



The Challenge

City was an early adopter of our original Syllabus Plus (S+) scheduling software; it has been their chosen timetabling solution for almost 20 years. Initially used as a simple room booking tool, in 2007 City radically changed the way it schedules to use the newly-released Enterprise Foundation suite to its full capacity. Using Web Data Collector, City were able to collect information on module data and timings. This, along with collecting lecturer availability and information on student programme pathways, enabled it to auto-schedule for the first time. But the project identified an area in need of improvement: the University's IT support for timetabling was, at times, not robust enough, and was a significant risk to the more complex scheduling procedure.

The Solution

Without the internal IT resource to support its timetabling team, City approached Scientia, and together we created a bespoke 'Gold Service' package—the blueprint for today's Premium Support service. The intention was to provide enhanced product support and training for one year, enabling City to bring IT support for timetabling back in-house. Due to changes in City's IT infrastructure and, above all, satisfaction with the enhanced support service from Scientia, the University decided to continue with Premium Support.

"For us, Premium Support is a no-brainer. We have dedicated Scientia support staff which understand our systems. When a fault is detected, it's dealt with swiftly by a knowledgeable team."

Hannah Evans

Head of Timetabling
City University London



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24/7 Support

"For us, it's just a much better option to keep the service with Scientia," said Hannah Evans, Head of Timetabling at City. Hannah is clear on the benefits of Premium Support: *"It's always having someone on the end of the phone. We have dedicated support staff who understand our systems. That took some time to set up, but now Scientia has a schema of City's systems and how we timetable. When a fault is detected, it's dealt with swiftly by a knowledgeable team who know our system."*

Robust Reporting

Our quarterly reports have been particularly beneficial: *"We see how many cases were logged, what the problems were, fix times and who dealt with the issue, so we know that Scientia is meeting its Service Level Agreement."* It's this

comprehensive management information which helps City to justify the service. With budgets contracting, Premium Support was under intense scrutiny during its recent review. City's Procurement Team confirmed it was good value for money, and signed a new three-year contract in March 2016.

Student Satisfaction

With the timetable more visible than its ever been, continuity of service is paramount. Around City's campuses, digital displays show in real-time if a room is booked or free, and students can use free rooms as ad-hoc work spaces. The University will soon implement Publish, enabling students to get their course timetables into their calendars on any web-connected device—another leap in timetable visibility, and another reason why Hannah is glad to have Premium Support behind it: *"It's comforting to know that the most serious issues will be fixed faster than they would with standard support."*

Continuous Improvement

The goal for this year is to improve Scientia's remote monitoring of City's system, though Hannah admits that's a shared challenge due to data access: *"We've seen improvements over time through a collaborative process. I'm hopeful that trend will continue."*

