

"The question that we're trying to solve with the app is: how can we make it easier for them to make the most of these opportunities?

David Goddard, Head of Digital Experience, UCL

Case Study | University College London

Simplifying the complexities of the student experience

University College London (UCL) is one campusM's longest standing customers, having first implemented the app in 2012. In 2020, David Goddard took up the position of Head of Digital Student Experience at the university and began an evaluation of the app. Goddard saw potential in campusM, but he didn't believe it was being utilized to simplify the student experience the way it should be. Goddard and his team relaunched the app in 2022 as 'UCL Go' with a new vision, a revised look and feel, new functionality and a new marketing campaign aimed at encouraging students to engage with the app.

Key Takeaways:



Bringing together university services, resources and opportunities into a single pane is a critical part of UCL's strategy to simplify the student experience using digital technologies



Post-relaunch, undergraduate approval of the app rose to 90%



App push notification open rates average between 40-60%



Over 90% of active users regularly use the app

About University College London

UCL is one of the world's top universities. At its establishment in 1826, UCL was radical and responsive to the needs of society, and this ethos – that excellence should go hand-in-hand with enriching society – continues today. UCL's excellence extends across all academic disciplines; from one of Europe's largest and most productive hubs for biomedical science interacting with several leading London hospitals, to world-renowned centres for architecture (UCL Bartlett) and fine art (UCL Slade School). With an annual turnover exceeding £1 billion, it is a major research and education hub in London and globally.



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Reducing the complexity of the student experience. Goddard's team are keenly aware of the complexities of the student experience. UCL is using campusM to make life easier for student by bringing all core services and resources into one place, distilling the UCL digital experience into a single pane in the palm of their hands.

"It's a highly complex experience for students at university. We layer on lots of different services and systems that they have to interact with. Simplifying that experience is our fundamental premise for using campusM. It's a bewildering set of opportunities they have, and the question that we're trying to solve with the app is: how can we make it easier for them to make the most of these opportunities?"

David Goddard, Head of Digital Experience, UCL



Delivering features and functionalities at speed. The way in which administrators can use the app to deliver features has been a key benefit of the app. Goddard notes that the ability to experiment and learn about what the product can do within the sandbox environment has allowed his team to innovate about new ways to use the app without impacting the student app experience.



Improving communication with students. Like other institutions, UCL is facing student email fatigue, with an average open rate of 5% for their weekly email communications. They're seeing a much higher engagement rate with campusM push notifications, with open rates typically fluctuating between 40-60%.



Enhancing the orientation experience. Over 6.5k students completed UCL's 2022 survey about their welcome and induction experience. The survey showed that support for the relaunched campusM app, UCL Go, rose by 13%, bringing undergraduate approval to 90%.



Meeting student expectations. In the UCL Go student beta tester group, "look and feel" was voted the most important aspect of the app.

"I see campusM very much as an experience and lifestyle product rather than a functional thing. It does address all the hygiene factors like timetable, library, VLE, and you do need to address those factors. But if you can try and make the app a beautiful and pleasurable experience – well that's been really important to our student body."

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UCL's top tips for making the most of your campus app:

- Having the right technology will only get you so far. It can make your life easier, if you're doing things in the right way and if you're working smart. You need to get the people, the processes, and the culture right in order for technology to deliver.
- Don't underestimate the importance your app's aesthetics. In the UCL Go student beta tester group, "look and feel" was voted the most important aspect of the app.
- Students want to give feedback on their digital experience. "We encouraged students to share their thoughts with us by offering drinks and refreshments," says Goddard. "But actually, students were very willing to talk to us about what really mattered to them. Their involvement in the design process has been key."
- Leverage your app to get feedback. UCL is using campusM Quick Polls to collect user feedback in real time. "It's so nice to be able to release a feature, ask beta testers what they think about the feature through the app, and within a minute have 50 responses," explains Goddard. "That kind of immediacy is a game changer for us."

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