

Delivering a safer university experience for the University of Sheffield



The University of Sheffield is using Synectics' Synergy platform to integrate its surveillance as part of its continued drive to maximise the safety and welfare of its students, staff and visitors.

The University of Sheffield is one of the top 100 universities in the world and part of the prestigious Russell Group.

With around 30,000 students across four academic, residential and research campuses, security is high on the agenda.

As the University has grown, so has its commitment to keep students, staff and the public safe on the centrally located sites. There are currently more than 1,200 cameras across the campuses, and this number is only growing as more sites are connected.

The University chose Synergy to integrate and manage its surveillance technology after evaluating multiple providers.

Richard Yates, Head of Security at the University of Sheffield, said: "With 20 CCTV trained operators, we needed a system that could be tailored to individual needs and preferences while being able to assess threats and risks across different sites.

"Ease of use was a key priority for us, so Synergy was by far the best option for the University. We recently upgraded to the most recent version, and it has added features we are looking forward to trying."



Keeping students, staff and the public safe

The University of Sheffield has responsibility for the welfare and safety of students and staff, as well as the public when on campus. The University needed a system that was smart enough to work across all sites and give an overview in a single front-end system.

CCTV plays a vital role in highlighting and tracking incidents like theft, assault, and mental health issues. In the past year alone, it has been used in more than 350 investigations, and the Synergy upgrade could open up more opportunities.

Richard gave an example: “Imagine we had a report of car theft on campus, but the person reporting it said the car could have been taken any time in the past week. Rather than search through seven days of footage which would use up vital time, we

could go back one week to when the car was last seen, highlight it, and let Synergy track it until motion is detected. We could then share the footage with the police.”

The University uses the evidence locker functionality to securely share evidence with law enforcement while logging access for a full audit trail. The system can also match the evidence with additional information like crime reference numbers and internal report numbers.

Planning for the future with easy reporting

Ease of reporting is one of Synergy’s key strengths. The University is accountable to multiple stakeholders, so being able to generate reports quickly is important.

Richard encourages his team to make the most of this functionality: “Our operational requirements drive the

budget we are allocated. The data we use to show this needs to be accurate and fit for purpose. It also needs to be presented in an easy-to-understand way, and quick to collate. Perhaps more importantly, being transparent allows us to be held to account by our students and public bodies like the Information Commissioner’s Office.”

The University has a 24-hour manned central control room on the main campus and a second one a few miles away which can be used in the event of an evacuation.

It voluntarily adheres to the Surveillance Camera Code of Conduct and invites a third party to audit its practices. Synergy provides vital assistance during the accreditation and auditing process carried out by SSAIB (Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board).

“Being audited and accredited can only be a good thing,” said Richard. “It means we are always on the lookout



PROJECT DETAILS

End user

University of Sheffield

Location

Sheffield, United Kingdom

For further information on the products, services, and systems offered by Synectics, visit synecticsglobal.com.

PR contact

For further editorial information, please contact:

E: press@synecticsglobal.com

for ways to develop and improve, and everyone is confident that the systems we have in place are fit for purpose and used properly. This is increasingly important as we balance protecting students with their privacy.”

Furthering education

Continual training is important to keep the University’s operators current and competent, and for the operators’ career progression. Synectics is always on hand for training and support which has its benefits, according to Richard: “We want to learn the full capabilities of Synergy and see different ways of

doing things. The University is based very close to Synectics so the ease of planning a training session at their facility was an added bonus.”

The University is currently implementing ‘geofencing’ in some areas, so controllers will be automatically alerted if someone enters sensitive areas like secure research facilities. It is also looking at expanding its relationship with Synectics by migrating its evidence to the Cloud Evidence Locker, a secure digital platform which provides the same auditing capabilities as on-premise.

Richard finished, “As a University, we want to keep students, staff, the public, and our own intellectual property safe. Synectics allows us to do this and supports us in our goal of being transparent and accountable.”

Synectics designs integrated end-to-end surveillance control systems for the world’s most demanding security environments. We excel at complex projects that require innovative, tailored solutions with high reliability and flexibility, specifically for casinos, oil and gas, marine, public space, banking, transport and critical infrastructure applications. Synectics’ Systems division is part of Synectics plc, a global leader in advanced surveillance, security and integration technologies and services.

SYNECTICS

Synectics
synecticsglobal.com