

**Client:**  
Birkbeck,  
University of London

**Project:**  
Provide ongoing monitoring  
and live availability of library  
study desk space to improve  
the student experience of  
University facilities.



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*Birkbeck's OccuEye system is a shining light for innovation and forward thinking in satisfying student demand for space.*  
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**Jeremy Tanner**  
Director of Commercial  
Services and Estate Development

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*The 'student experience' has become a key component in the university facilities managers' approach.*  
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To talk to us about OccuEye  
or to book a demo:

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# Case Study | Birkbeck, Education | University of London



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*The students have found  
OccuEye extremely valuable  
and useful.*

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According to UCAS, the number of university applicants has reached a record high as demand for higher education courses continues to increase. As a result, universities have come under increasing pressure to make more space available, especially in London. In addition, rising tuition fees now mean students are judging institutions not just on the courses but on the facilities being offered. As a result, it has become essential for universities to provide first-class facilities in order to attract students and further enhance the learning experience.

Birkbeck, University of London caters for 19,000 students and, as London's only specialist provider of evening higher education courses, there is a huge demand for space. According to Jeremy Tanner, Director of Commercial Services and Estate Development, *"it's not only teaching spaces that are precious; offices, libraries, support space and catering areas all need to be maximised in terms of space."*

The university was greatly concerned by the high volume of student complaints to the helpdesk, alleging a large-scale shortage of space within the library. As Jeremy is well aware, the library contributes directly to the institution's academic mission; as such, the provision of good quality resources will have a positive impact on student productivity.

Jeremy was confident that, in reality, there was much more space available than was being alleged by the students. His challenge, however, was to prove that this really was the case. To do so, he needed compelling factual evidence. He recalls: *"We needed a way to actually get some quantitative data, rather than anecdotal evidence about the usage patterns across the library."*

Historically, the university had carried out manual audits by using staff to walk around the library and analyse space usage. But this proved to be a costly exercise. Jeremy explains: *"It cost several thousand pounds over the year, monitoring 6 designated areas across the library! We weren't comfortable trusting that kind of data; it just gave us an indication, rather than offering any solutions."*

## OccuEye in action

The university needed an automated monitoring system to deliver real-time data, whilst the students required at-a-glance information on the availability of study space. Comprehensive, objective and user-friendly, OccuEye ticked both of these boxes! Jeremy says: *"Our discussions with OccuEye were constructive, which wasn't the case with other providers with whom we had spoken."* As a result, OccuEye sensors were permanently installed, under every desk and with a screen at the entrance showing the available desks; this transformation caused minimal disruption to the library.

## Outcome

OccuEye provided the university with highly accurate analytics and reports, indicating when the library space is utilised most frequently. Furthermore, the university has identified the most popular areas utilised by students. This has allowed Jeremy to easily and immediately identify available space when there is a surge in demand. He smiles: *"There are prime locations over four floors, but it is common for students to gather in the areas on the first floor of the library."*

OccuEye has enabled the university to make strategic estate decisions. *"Being able to produce qualitative data in committee meetings has been instrumental in making decisions about layout and expansion of the library,"* says Jeremy.

Thanks to OccuEye, students coming to the library now use their smart phones, laptops and iPads to check where space is available. Jeremy says: *"The students have found it extremely valuable and useful to be able to look at a screen when they walk into the library and know immediately where study spaces are available"*

As a result of deploying OccuEye, Birkbeck, University of London's library space is maximised, the helpdesk staff no longer have to contend with complaints and the students' learning experience has been greatly enhanced.