



# User experience and the Digital Led University

Creating a university experience that  
inspires achievement

- An Advisory Services PoV

**CGI**



# The university experience

Users are at the heart of every organisation. This is especially the case for the higher education sector, where “the user” is a wider range of stakeholders with vastly differing needs, from students and alumni, to staff and investors.

CGI is here to support universities to deliver a consistent, world-class service and experience that suits the wide-ranging expectations, requirements and touchpoints of these varying stakeholders, at every point throughout their university experience lifecycle.



## The challenge

The broad demographics across a campus creates an important consideration for the higher education sector. It is essential that our universities provide fully accessible and flexible user service operations that satisfy everyone, from the younger, more tech-savvy undergraduate, to the older lecturer who may prefer more traditional contact channels, like voice. It is also essential that we consider students from different cultures (i.e. where English will not be their first language) and with disabilities.

Recent challenges have also only made the user contact industry more complex. Specifically, the higher education sector was forced to change entire operating models and quickly develop remote working methods for staff, virtual classrooms for students, and much more to enable academic life to continue. This adoption of a more digital academic environment presents the question:

How can our universities maintain a personalised, high quality service whilst operating remotely?

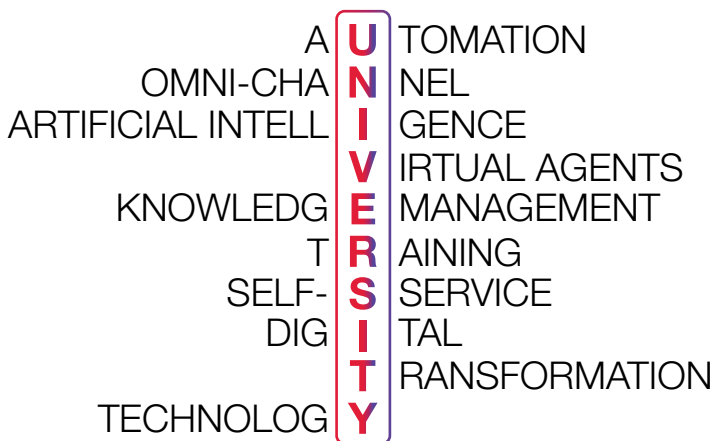


All stakeholders have become increasingly demanding, with higher expectations of the services they receive. Contact arrival patterns also present a challenge to meet these expectations, for example, with high spikes expected around clearing times. If users do not receive the expected service, it is likely that they will share feedback publicly, such as on social media, and given that the success of the higher education sector relies upon attracting the best students from around the

globe, this public impression is essential, and most definitely plays a part in helping students to assess their options.

The need to excel when it comes to user and stakeholder experience is therefore ever-more important. Nevertheless, given all these delivery challenges, it is no surprise that only 7.6% of academic staff rate their university's user services as a grade "A".

How can CGI help your university to overcome these challenges?



# Digital transformation

As with many industries, the higher education sector has looked to digital transformation in order to keep pace with user expectations and demands. However, many are simply interchanging the term 'digital transformation' with 'technology adoption', and are therefore falling short in realising the multitude of user experience benefits as well as a maximised return on investment.

Furthermore, digital transformation isn't just about the technology; it is also about culture and behaviour. Stakeholders need to be properly informed and fully on-board with the journey, and the right communication and training throughout is therefore just as essential as implementing the best technology solutions.

Excellent user experience therefore relies upon a complete transformation in how your university approaches students and stakeholders: but this is where CGI can help.

## Omni-channel strategy and solutions

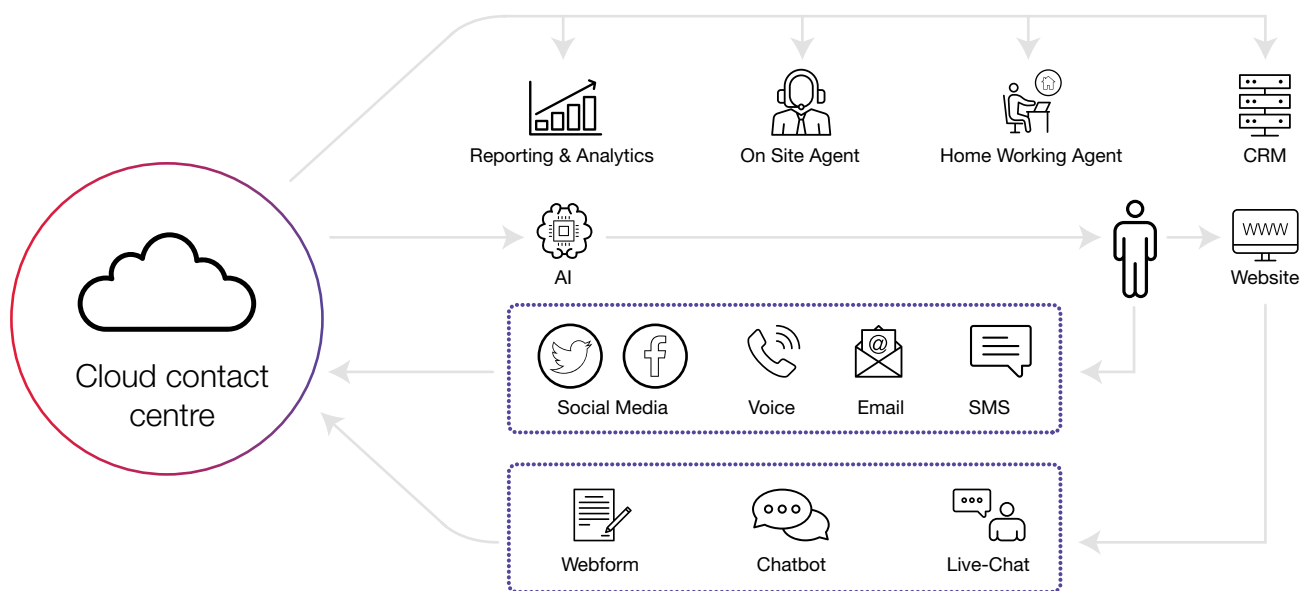
Stakeholders expect their questions and issues to be addressed in a convenient and efficient manner. They should be able to get the answers they need whenever they want, on whatever channel they prefer. An omni-channel strategy and cloud-based contact centre as a service solution is therefore critical, as an on-premise contact centre solution is not fit for purpose in this evolving digital world.



With the right solution in place, your university will have a tool that can flex to scale when you need it, particularly at times of high demand. Come clearing time, if you need to double your agent workforce, you can do so at the click of a button, without the need for third party intervention. This also offers complete flexibility for agents via remote/home working, without any loss in service quality.

CGI's university experience approach provides an omni-channel contact solution which seamlessly blends the available contact channels.

An agent can handle a call, webchat or social media post all using one single user-interface, and by linking this to your customer record management (CRM) platform, the agent has a 360-degree view of the user and their full journey in order to provide the highest quality service. The platform not only enables choice for the user, but also for the agent, with the ability to effortlessly shift between channels.



The platform also empowers your higher education organisation with a real-time and historical view of all performance measures. Managers are able to customise dashboards to show the specific information that they need to see, and can set alerts if certain thresholds are breached (for example, dropping below SLAs). Furthermore, whilst traditional measures such as CSAT or NPS are important for gaining insight into

stakeholders' satisfaction with how agents are handling and resolving queries and complaints, the platform also provides speech analytics to further track sentiment.

Using speech-to-text transcription and best-in-class language technologies, voice calls can be searched and grouped by negative or positive keywords and phrases, helping you to quickly and accurately gain an understanding of user interactions and satisfaction.

## Self-service, automation and artificial intelligence (AI)

The volume of contacts experienced by the higher education sector is increasing every year, which provides a complication: how can your university afford to continually add more people in to handle the service?

Users want effective responses quickly and efficiently, and often waiting in a queue for support will not work. Self-service and automation methods have therefore become essential to both reduce the cost to serve and keep stakeholders happy, and your organisation must make sure that the right tools (such as your website) and knowledge hubs are in place to empower users with self-service wherever possible. For example, this will enable processes such as rent payments and applying for courses online.

Virtual agents are an AI-powered customer assistant bot, handling multiple languages for voice and digital interactions to deliver the answers that users need whenever they need them. Voice virtual agents are powered by speech recognition technology and conversational AI that uses natural language processing (NLP) and natural language understanding (NLU) to accurately comprehend users' needs, providing answers via an automated human voice response.

Similarly, digital virtual agent utilise these technologies to work with various chat channels (such as webchat and SMS) and make sense of typos and misspellings to identify users' needs and provide instant answers.

Implementing AI in this way can be extremely effective in helping students to get simple answers without needing human support. For example, queries such as "what time does the library close?" can easily be resolved through automation solutions. Where a query is more sensitive or complicated, virtual agents can then efficiently route students to the right person to address the issue.

Utilising a proactive communication strategy will also greatly benefit the higher education sector. By harnessing data on why and when in the lifecycle stakeholders are contacting you, your university can use automation to help prevent reactive contact wherever possible. For example, if you know students are likely to contact you with questions about collecting their accommodation keys at the start of a new academic year, you can use automation to send information in advance via their preferred channel, so utilising SMS and email as well as traditional letters and physical welcome packs.

In 2020, Drift noted a 92% increase in the use of chatbots from the previous year, making this the brand communication channel with the largest growth.\* This truly highlights the growing importance of implementing customer interactions that involve emerging technologies and machine learning, and as a result the higher education sector is increasingly looking to virtual agents as a method of communication with stakeholders.

Reference:

\* Drift, 2020 State of Conversational Marketing report.

## Empower your teams

With the power of AI and automation tools, you will relieve some of the pressure on your existing agents so they can allocate time to deal with more complex enquiries and vulnerable stakeholders who may need additional support.

One way that your university can do this is through knowledge management and agent assist tools that use AI and machine learning to provide agents with automated assistance, real-time contextualised recommendations and next best actions whilst they are dealing with a stakeholder. For example, a student informs the virtual agent that the demands of university life are getting too much for them, and with student wellbeing a top priority for the entire higher education sector, the virtual agent could then prioritise this contact in the queue and make sure it is picked up first by a human agent. The agent is already aware of the reason the student is contacting them, and the assist tool can provide them with scripts and instant access to all the relevant services they can offer, such as arranging support from a student representative or other mental wellbeing services. The tool then enables the agent to send this information directly to the student via an email or SMS in one simple step. This functionality improves agent efficiency, compliance and first contact resolution, helping engagement scores and user satisfaction to increase.

Your solution should also include a workforce management tool with a forecasting module that uses historical data (volume, handle time, after contact work time, etc.) to create an expected demand forecast that calculates staffing requirements and skills to service these workloads accordingly at an interval, day, week and month level. By making sure the right agents are in the right place at the right time for your stakeholders,



you will drive efficiency and empower agents by giving them some flexibility around shifts and holiday requesting.

Performance and quality management modules with functionality including agent leader boards, coaching sessions and performance exception notifications are also essential to help empower your teams. Using this tooling, user interactions can be evaluated using audio playback, synchronised screen recordings, time stamped comments and reactions, and supervisors can use this interactive data to evaluate agent performance against goals. This can also help to peer benchmark across metrics such as CSAT and quality scores, identifying development opportunities and personalised coaching modules.



Our Contact Centre Advisory team takes a fresh approach to working with clients, helping them to provide user-focused, cost efficient solutions that are underpinned by sustainability.

## Why CGI?

The user experience landscape has changed significantly in recent years, and having a team with their finger on the pulse of this industry is therefore key.

Our consultants have been recruited from the contact centre and customer experience industry, all with a proven track record in delivering and leading world-class operations for the largest, best-known organisations both in the UK and abroad. Having worked across a broad range of industries, our consultants stand out for their passion for the industry and genuinely care about delivering the highest quality experience for the customers of our clients, and our clients themselves.



We are not technology “resellers”, and we are not tied to any one vendor. Instead, we have identified a panel of vendors who offer the best solutions for our clients, but do not let that limit our capability. We know the industry market and on occasions where our panel may be unable to provide you with the optimum solution, we will work with you to source technology that meets your exact requirements.

To completely understand your desired outcomes and challenges, we follow our consultative approach:





We don't make compromises, and we wouldn't expect you to either. Our approach is therefore to completely understand the outcomes you are seeking, and advise you accordingly on what is possible. Every step along the way, we clearly define what your solution should look like and the benefits it will deliver.

We approach each project with a set of fresh eyes, collaborating with our clients to achieve their visions of providing customer-focused, cost efficient solutions that are underpinned by sustainability. We help our clients to maximise their return on investment and solve genuine problems for their customers, which is why we achieve over 93% in terms of our client satisfaction.

Additionally, we deliver world-class contact centre support to over 180 clients from our award-winning UK service desk, where more than 380 analysts handle over 2.5 million contacts per year with a 95% first time fix rate for resolvable issues.

We operate a mature, standard set of processes across all our services, tailoring them where necessary to align with specific client needs. We will bring this practical experience to deliver a range of quick wins for your higher education organisation, with tactical and strategic initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your service for the benefit of your students, staff and all other stakeholders.

We also offer advisory services across what we call the “three pillars” of customer experience: people, process and performance. Using our consultants’ vast expertise and up to date knowledge on the evolution of customer experience, contact centres and technology, our consulting services cover:

### Process | Technology

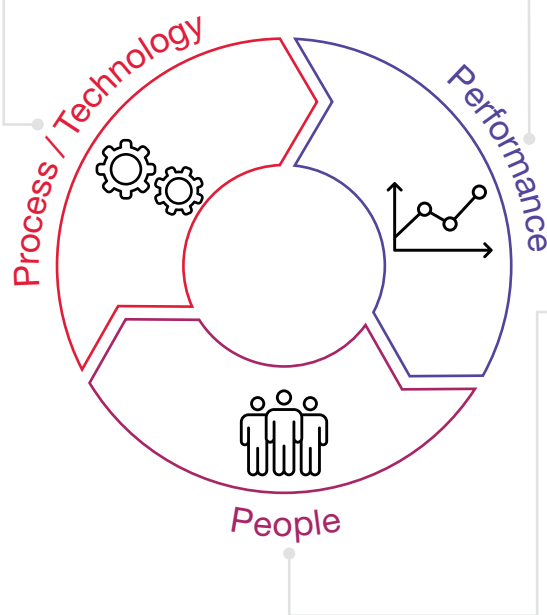
- Digital transformation
- Customer journey mapping
- IVR design
- PCI DSS solutions
- GDPR compliance / management
- Future proofing customer contact
- Contact centre development / design
- BPO — onshore / offshore
- Home / hybrid working solutions
- CRM / API integration
- AI / Bot implementation
- Live chat
- Social media management
- Customer self-service design
- Customer experience management
- Reporting automation
- Industry insights
- Process automation
- Change management
- Unified communications
- Technology / IT consulting
- Communications (tone of voice) shaping
- Supplier RFP / procurement / management
- Disaster recovery / BCP

### Performance

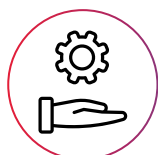
- KPI / SLA strategy
- Voice analytics
- Contract performance validation
- Contact centre benchmarking
- Compliant diagnosis
- Customer retention improvement
- Security audit
- Communications (tone of voice) audit
- IVR optimisation
- Workforce management

### People

- Incentive development
- Gamification
- Resource / capacity planning
- Training
- Recruitment support
- Team engagement / experience / retention
- Knowledge management
- Management / team leader development
- Best practice design
- HR advisory



## Our offerings:



Managed services



Service implementation



Technology procurement



Contact centre consultancy



Operational health checks



## About CGI

### **Insights you can act on**

Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world. We are insights-driven and outcomes-based to help accelerate returns on your investments.

Across hundreds of locations worldwide, we provide comprehensive, scalable and sustainable IT and business consulting services that are informed globally and delivered locally.

Learn more at [cgi.com/uk](https://cgi.com/uk)

For more information [enquiry.uk@cgi.com](mailto:enquiry.uk@cgi.com)

