

# UEL steps up student event attendance and cuts accommodation queries by 95%

Aiming higher than simply branding their student portal, University of East London saw that they could use Room Service to reduce their workload and, faced every year with excess demand from returning students, help select those who contribute most to campus life.

The University of East London has three campuses, two in Stratford E15 and one in Docklands E16, which is where its 1169 bedrooms are situated. It has some 17,000 students.

Prior to their upgrade, UEL's version of Room Service was working well but was notably out-of-date. Opportunities to make it more user-friendly and to apply lessons learned elsewhere - such as reducing the amount of information required, but making more of it mandatory - were plentiful. More specifically, the team at UEL were keen to generate real enthusiasm for the accommodation application process, as it was felt this would encourage on-going engagement. A key outcome of this thinking was the 'Progress Bar'. Developed by Kinetic specifically for UEL, it was inspired by something with which many students are familiar, as Emily Leach of the UEL residential team, explained:

*"When you place an order with Dominos, your order*

*status is shown by their online 'Pizza Tracker'. We wanted to have a similar at-a-glance display to show progress through the application process."*

Barely three months in, the results of the progress bar and its accompanying redesign of the UEL portal, have already proved quite remarkable. The new system has prompted

*"We are seeing real enthusiasm for the application process."*





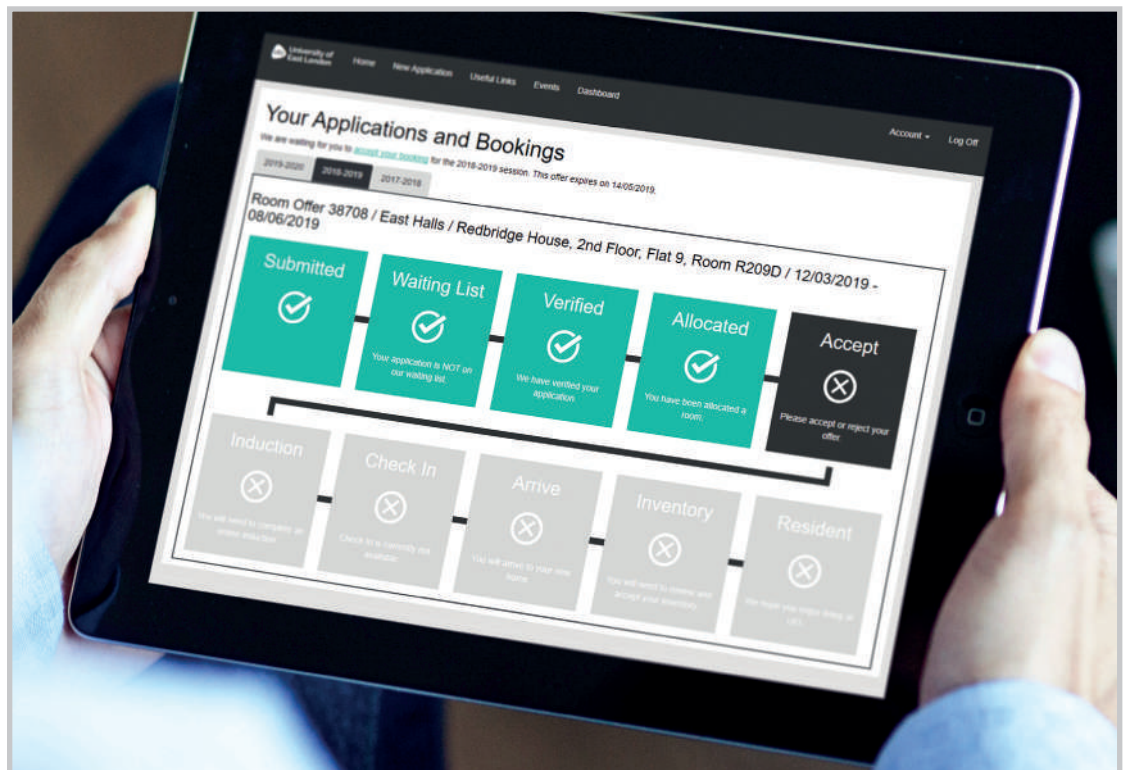
*"It's really working. Now that we have one starting point for everything, we're catching things like maintenance issues much earlier."*

a great many compliments (especially from returning students familiar with how it was) and configuration of new pages is significantly quicker and easier. Best of all, says Emily, the information given to students and taken from them is now so solid that in-coming queries have been cut from 15 a day, to less than one. Not that the benefits have stopped there.

#### 'Re-purposed' Event Management

UEL, like other universities, recognised the opportunity to use Room Service to more easily publicise and process registrations for student events. They also saw an opportunity to use the

addition, UEL has now told all students that their attendance record in relation to university events will be taken into account. This has boosted registration, especially for quasi-mandatory events such as health & safety briefings and, most especially, reduced the number of students who book places on free events and then don't turn up. Thus the 'critical mass' needed to make events successful is reached more often, increasing the popularity of such events overall. It's too early to report firm outcomes but Emily Leach and her colleagues at UEL's residential team are confident the this new approach will



*"We have lots of free events to which anyone could turn up, but with little information to go on before or after. Now we can see how many are likely to attend, what is popular with which groups of students and identify those who contribute most to campus life."*

event management system as part of their drive to build a stronger campus community.

#### Prioritising returning students who contribute

Having an excess of demand from returning students every year, UEL has always used Room Service data to help prioritise applications. Most obviously, they want to welcome back students who have been good tenants and neighbours. In

help them to make campus life even more vibrant and energised, than it is now.