

# Queen Margaret University: a case study

## 1. Objectives

The property strategy involved replacing three sites in Edinburgh with a single new campus in Musselburgh, on the eastern edge of the city. A number of issues supported this approach.

- 1.1 The very poor condition of the estate at Corstorphine was reflected in the University having the worst building conditions of any higher education institution in Scotland.
- 1.2 There was a mismatch between room sizes and room types available at Corstorphine. The catering and hospitality courses, and their specialist spaces, could not be adapted to make them appropriate for health and drama facilities.
- 1.3 The Leith site was in relatively good condition but its age and listed status hampered developments.
- 1.4 The splitting of schools between sites resulted in the duplication of facilities..
- 1.5 Surveys revealed a consistently low level of utilisation, and a shortage of certain facilities, for teaching and research requirements.
- 1.6 The amount of space per full time equivalent student was generous. Given the nature of much of the accommodation it was difficult to remodel the estate to achieve higher levels of utilisation.

## The former estate



Corstorphine



Leith



Gateway Central Edinburgh



## 2. Space savings

It was decided that the most cost effective option was to close the three university sites in Corstorphine, Leith and Central Edinburgh. A new, efficient and cost effective site was modelled east of the city. The following table summarised the modelled changes in the estate.

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| Type of space   | Current estate m <sup>2</sup> | Planned campus m <sup>2</sup> | Difference m <sup>2</sup> | Difference % |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Total NIA       | 26,519                        | 18,379                        | - 8,140                   | - 30.7       |
| Total GIA       | 33,046                        | 24,165                        | - 8,881                   | - 26.9       |
| NIA per student | 7.9                           | 4.5                           | - 3.4                     | - 43.0       |
| GIA per student | 9.7                           | 5.9                           | - 3.8                     | - 39.2       |

Changes in space resources and space utilisation levels have generated significant financial savings.

### The new campus



The Main Building



The Learning Centre

Photos: © Dyer, Architects

### 3. Financial savings

The unique space modelling system developed by Stellae has enabled the improved use of space resources and the generation of substantial financial savings.

- 3.1 The gross internal area of the university was reduced by 31%, from 33,046 to 24,165 square metres. The space reduction represents an estimated saving of £23.9 million in capital costs.
- 3.2 The saved space costs associated with the new university estate are estimated at £1.8 million per year.
- 3.3 Space utilisation has increased significantly. The university has become one of the most space efficient in the higher education sector on the basis of its current student enrolments. Student numbers could be increased by 30% based on the extension of the teaching week.

In 2004 the space utilisation level of the Corstorphine and Leith sites was 17%. The introduction of the recommended timetabling software has enabled the surveyed space utilisation level of the entire university to increase to 42%. The improved use of space resources has had a major impact on the required income per used workplace.

The revenue generating teaching, learning and research facilities<sup>1</sup> total 9,954 square metres or 42% of the gross internal area of the new university campus. Loading all the space costs onto revenue generating space results in an average income per used student workplace of £15,182 at a space utilisation level of 17%. Increasing the space utilisation level to 42% has reduced the average income per used student workplace to £6,145. Improved space utilisation has saved £9,037 per used student workplace. This saving has a significant impact on the financial viability of course programmes and research projects.

The expected impact of innovative technologies on course delivery methods has resulted in a central learning support centre with a greater capacity than the combined teaching facilities. The learning support centre is able to offer 24 hour student access. The changes in areas and capacities have been achieved with minimum risk due to the ability to model space requirements on the basis of workable timetables.

**The ability of the university to respond to the changing needs of students, staff and the wider economy has been enhanced on the basis of Stellae's proven expertise in space modelling and timetabling.**

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<sup>1</sup> It is assumed research, conference facilities and other revenue generating space cover the space costs of their facilities.

