# ASTON UNIVERSITY –
## PROMOTING SAFETY AND SECURITY WITH TOUCHSTAR'S ACCESS CONTROL AND CCTV SOLUTIONS

### CASE STUDY: EDUCATION

Aston University, in the centre of Birmingham, UK, is home to over 15,000 students in one of Europe's liveliest and most welcoming cities. Consistently ranked within the UK's top 40 universities, Aston is known for its world-class teaching, graduate employment success and strong links to industry, government and commerce. It also ranks in the top 15 of the government's National Student Survey.

### BACKGROUND

Today's higher education sector is big business and maximising staff and student safety is central to any university's duty of care. With more students looking further afield for the best university experience, safety is a key factor in the choice of where to study. Independent sources such as the UK's annual National Student Survey, which rates universities according to the quality of experience and wellbeing, are also a key influence on reputation.

Leading UK based specialist TouchStar Access Time CCTV has been supplying access control systems to Aston University for over twenty years. During this time, TouchStar has established itself as a preferred supplier to the University, installing Access Control and CCTV systems across the student campus and accommodation sites, ranging from door access, internal and external CCTV cameras to intercoms and carpark barriers.

### HOW IT WORKS

#### Access Control

TouchStar's Access Control systems help control personnel access rights across both the university campus and student accommodation. The existing access control system is installed on over 2800 doors within the University. Utilising proximity cards, the University operates two access control systems that cover the University campus and student village individually. Aston University have both offline and online systems in place. For the online systems, Aston University is able to define and manage all aspects of access control across the university campus and student accommodation. The administrative rights allow Aston University to designate the areas that the staff and students have access to such as lecture theatres, classrooms, libraries and the main entrances to the student accommodation.

For the bedroom doors, Aston University were looking to integrate a cost effective, robust system. Implementing an offline system, the university were able to provide an additional level of security to over 2400 student bedroom doors within the university residences.

To provide additional security, the existing system integrates access controls within the main cark parks and communal areas. For the main car parks, Aston University utilise control barriers and intercoms, additional IP intercoms are also in place to control access rights within the communal areas of the University.

As the system continues to evolve, Aston University are looking to move towards a one card system which will enable staff and students to access areas of both the University and Student Accommodation. This will provide the University with even greater control as they move towards the integration of current system.

### Access Control

Aston place the safety and protection of all staff and students as a top level priority. The university currently uses TouchStar's analogue CCTV system integrating 334 static and 220 fully-functional cameras across the campus and student villages.

When the housing team sought to improve the IT network for students living at Aston Brook Green, they identified an opportunity to upgrade key aspects of security surveillance. The team – though satisfied with the scope of coverage provided by its existing network of CCTV cameras – wanted to make the transition to high-definition surveillance to enhance the level of protection offered to students. Intuitive software now enables the housing team to remotely monitor camera views with ease from a desktop, iPhone or Android device.  Aston University are now looking to upgrade the existing analogue systems with the new digital CCTV surveillance. Ultimately this will significantly improve the way they
are able to control, view and record the equipment with additional coverage and high quality images.

### CONTINUED SUPPORT

Providing an end to end solution for Aston University, TouchStar manage the system specifications through to installation and ongoing maintenance. For the installations, TouchStar supply and install their own fibre optic infrastructure which facilitates the fast movement of data to and from all systems. Having full ownership of the infrastructure has allowed TouchStar to provide a flexible and responsive solution which facilitates fast amends for the University.

To ensure full reliability of each installation, TouchStar have a number of full-time onsite engineers that provide 24/7 support and preventative maintenance checks. By providing round-the-clock support to the university, TouchStar's relationship with Aston ensures that their duty of care to students and staff is maintained at all times. This ongoing support has also identified the additional areas for implementation and upgrade to as the University has continued to evolve.



### CHOOSING TOUCHSTAR ACCESS TIME CCTV

Mark Sutton, Head of Security comments,

**"Fundamentally, we need a robust and reliable solution that provides both flexibility and scalability. The TouchStar system provides all this. The protection and safety of my University community is paramount and the system provides us with full visibility of staff and student footfall to enable us to implement the measures to maintain our duty of care. Having worked with TouchStar for over 20 years our system has continued to evolve to meet our complex access and security needs. Providing not only the solution, but the consultation and support, we have absolute confidence that we have the best system in place to protect all of the staff, student and visitors within Aston University. "**

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As Aston University and its student village evolves, they continue to look into additional areas for implementation and upgrade. Working in conjunction with TouchStar, Aston University are currently looking at the potential of integrating Access Control with the CCTV system. The ability to integrate the two systems would allow Aston University to monitor incidents more effectively. In the instance of a fire, the TouchStar system would provide Aston University with the ability to automatically open doors, print a muster roll call, sending e-mails and controlling CCTV and pager systems in the event of a fire.