

## Report : Background information on the University Assistant App at Birmingham City University

The University Assistant app is a mobile application that is used at Birmingham City University. This mobile application serves as a communication tool for the University to push content and messages to their students. When students sign up to the app, they select their course, year of study and residence. From these parameters, we are able to target information to different groups, so students will only see information that is relevant to them. As well as being a communication tool through pushing content and updates, the app also serves as a troubleshooting tool as it hosts a live chat which students can use to ask any questions they have. We also have the ability to receive student feedback through polls.

This document outlines some of the work done on the University Assistant platform.

Below are some examples of the different types of content that have been used during a one year cycle.

### August




A lot of August is spent on creating and curating content for the new intake of students in September, whilst also doing the same for students continuing their studies in other years of study. An example of this is getting videos from Course Leaders, where they explain what the year ahead entails. This generally works well as new students can see their tutor for the first time, whilst continuing students get an idea of what they will be studying in the upcoming year.

### September

A lot of content is added and cycled during September because of the Welcome Week/start of semester at BCU. This includes a lot of transitional material that was developed for the app, whilst other material is repurposed from other BCU avenues. This content is heavily targeted so that students only see what is relevant to them. For example, our accommodation information article only goes to students who live in halls of residence, the School Office information would be



specific to what course the student is studying and videos from Course Leaders would only go to students who were on the course/year of study that relates to the video. Students are able to make full use of university services and support structures to help them along their studies.

<h3>Accommodation Information</h3> <p>Find out the latest info about our halls of residence</p>  <p>Here at Accommodation Services we are committed to assisting students in the transition from home to University life.</p> <p>The University offers accommodation in University Managed and Partner halls of residence at various locations in Birmingham.</p> <p>The majority of our accommodation offers en suite rooms, suitable for undergraduate and postgraduate students. We also have two-bedroom flats with shared facilities at University Locks.</p> <p>For students with a disability, we have accessible purpose-built rooms at some of the halls of residence. Further information is available on request.</p>	<h3>School Office Info - The Business School</h3> <p>Information on your School Office</p>  <p>Your Faculty Student Office deal with administrative aspects of your programme, including those relating to <b>enrolment and module registration, coursework, assessments and exams.</b></p> <p><b>Location - Curzon Building, C207</b>  <b>Opening hours - 9am-5pm</b></p> <p>Use the buttons below to call/email the School Office.  <b>Please include your student number when emailing.</b></p> <p><a href="#">CALL</a></p> <p><a href="#">EMAIL</a></p>	<h3>Accounting with Business Year 2 Overview</h3> <p>Course Leader Margaret Saunders tells us what you will be doing in year 2</p>  <p><a href="#">EMAIL MARGARET</a></p> <p>To view the course Moodle page, click the button below:</p> <p><a href="#">MOODLE</a></p>
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## October

As new students have been in the University for around one month, we use the platform to create a poll to ask how they are settling into life at university. The platform allows us to see which options students respond with, and we were also able to contact any students who said they need help via the platform's live chat. This means we can resolve any problems before they become unmanageable for students.




Notice

**BCUSU Heat Map Survey - Win 1 of 4 £20 Amazon Vouchers!**

This survey will help the Students' Union (BCUSU) collect insight about your experiences, to help the University understand what's needed to make your lives better during your time at university. The survey closes at 5pm Friday 28th October. [Click here to complete.](#)

**Next 7 days**  
Things to do in the next week

Event



**Go Abroad**  
10:00 to 15:00 on Oct 24  
Curzon building Atrium

## November

During November at BCU, there is a scheme called “Refresh for Success”. This is a week organised by University services, where they hold workshops for students relating to their specific service. The platform is used to advertise every upcoming event and the week after, we add a poll to ask if students attended the week. This allowed us to determine the popularity of the week and how well it was received.

Poll

**Did you attend any events during The Refresh For Success week?**

Last week (14 Nov to 18th Nov) was our Refresh For Success week where we had over 50 events from all of our BCU services. We want to know if you attended any of these sessions. **Please note we may share your poll response with relevant departments for the purposes of analysis and providing support.**

Yes I attended

I didn't attend

I didn't know about it

## December

As the holidays are approaching, usage tends to go down during this time. This is why we try and re-engage students by holding a competition called “The Big

Holiday Giveaway". We purposely design the competition in a way that makes students engage with the app features for them to enter. For this competition, students have to use the Live Chat feature to send the word 'PRIZE'. We promote this through the app, but also through newsletters, social media, emails and class shout outs. We respond to every student entry via the live chat and log them all.

Notice

**Big Holiday Giveaway - Win 1 of 4 £100 Amazon Vouchers**


From 21st November to 18th December, you have the chance to win 1 of 4 £100 Amazon vouchers through the University Assistant Big Holiday Giveaway. To enter, simply send us the word 'HOLIDAY' via the live chat.

## January/ February

January and February are grouped together as students do not start semester 2 till the end of January. This is the start of the 2nd semester, so a range of content was developed to remind students about the services on offer to them.

**Professional Services**

Learn about all of our Professional Services and how they can help you



At BCU, we have a range of professional services which can help you during your studies here. Scroll down to see the services we offer and how they can assist you.

**Careers+**

Careers+ is our BCU service that can help you throughout your time at BCU with assistance in finding jobs, volunteering opportunities or graduate roles for after your graduate. This service can also help with finding placements during your studies and each faculty has their own Careers+ team so they know exactly what type of roles/placements would



BCU also has exams taking place during this time, so we add these to UA and targeted them appropriately, so students only receive information about the exams they are taking.

## March

March is the 2nd “Refresh for Success” week of the academic year and we take the same approach as in November. This means that we add every event taking place onto the app and also send out push notifications each day to remind students to check the day’s sessions. We then follow up with a poll asking students if they attended the week. This poll gives us vital information on how well the week was promoted beforehand and how useful students perceived the sessions to be.

Poll

**Did you attend any events during The Refresh For Success week?**

Last week (20th March to 24th March) was our Refresh For Success week where we had loads of events from our BCU services. We want to know if you attended any of these sessions. **Please note we may share your poll response with relevant departments for the purposes of analysis and providing support.**

Yes I attended ✓

I didn't attend

I didn't know about it

## April

Due to our success in gaining rapid student feedback through our polls, we were approached by a representative from Togetherall – an online mental health service used by BCU. We were able to cooperate by using UA.

Poll

**Did you know BCU students can access Togetherall for free mental health support?**

Togetherall is free, mental health support for you as a BCU student, giving immediate access to community and professional support 24/7 and a hub of self-help tools in support your wellbeing. **Please note we may share your poll response with relevant departments for the purposes of analysis and providing support.**

Yes

No

What's Togetherall?

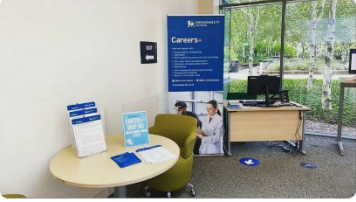


## May

May is also a time where students start to think about their future employment as the semester is coming to an end. This is why we start to push content on upcoming events from the University's Careers+ service. We also have staff members approach the team to push out urgent messages to their students about session cancellations.

**HELS Careers+ Drop-in Session**  
 11:00 to 13:00 on May 24  
 Mary Seacole Library

ADD TO MY EVENTS




Come along and meet with an adviser for support advice. No booking required!

Get help with:


- CVs**
- Job applications**
- Personal statements**
- Interviews**
- Job searching**
- Volunteering**
- Further study guidance**

13:41 40%

Thu, 19 May



Media



Devices

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**Assistant 13:41**

**CMP5074 - Session Cancelled**

Unfortunately, due to staff illness today's session has been cancelled. Your sessions will continue as normal from tomorrow.

## June/July/August

During the summer period, we do not add much content to the app as the majority of students have finished their courses for the academic year. This allows us the time to prepare the app for the next incoming intake of students in September. During this period, a lot of background work is done to get ready for the new academic year. For example, we require new lists of all the courses taking place in the University, any new courses we can add to the app, any courses that no longer take place so they can be deleted. We also contact all the services in the University to ensure that all the information we have for them is still relevant. We often have a lot of changes to make during this time.