



# Solihull College & University Centre

Giving Microsoft Teams a voice with Gamma SIP Trunks



## About Solihull College & University Centre

Solihull College & University Centre has built a justified reputation for providing further and higher education that makes a positive contribution to the local and regional economy in the West Midlands and Warwickshire.

In workplace programmes at employers' offices, factories and laboratories throughout the region, and from three educational campuses – two in Solihull and one in Stratford-upon-Avon – the college delivers tuition to some 11,000 students in a diverse range of vocational, professional and degree subjects from aerospace engineering, marketing and human resources, to photography and biosciences.

## The Challenge

The college has been a Gamma customer since 2010 when it contracted for SIP connectivity via Gamma's dedicated JANET access point.

At the same time, Gamma SIP trunks were deployed to replace costly ISDN telephony. The relationship was extended five years later with the addition of Gamma's Mobile service for teaching and administrative staff.

Thanks to Gamma, the college had enjoyed a decade of greater resiliency, line and call cost savings – and then Covid-19 intervened, national lockdowns forcing radical changes in delivery and making connectivity more important than ever.

It was the job of IT director David Gartside and his team to come up with a technical solution that would enable education and administration to continue as normally as possible.

## The Solution

As part of its campus agreement with Microsoft, the college had already deployed Microsoft Teams in a bid to reduce travel between the three campuses by using video conferencing and telephony. Gartside observes that even before the virus struck, that original deployment had grown in scale to support all aspects of collaborative business.

With the value of Microsoft Teams proven, and the college now wrestling with the challenge of how it could continue to provide courses to students in the new reality resulting from Covid, it was a logical step to extend MS Teams and use Gamma's MS Teams Direct Routing service.

## The Results

Gamma Microsoft Teams Direct Routing provides connectivity between the college internal network, the Internet and the world of fixed and mobile telephony, enabling Solihull College to continue business as normal – or at least as normal as the virus allows.

Gamma Microsoft Teams Direct Routing enables blended learning – a rich combination of screen sharing, virtual learning and dedicated video and conferencing facilities – so that staff can deliver lectures to students remotely.

Staff can work from wherever present Covid-related regulations allow, either on campus, or at home. The Gamma connectivity combined with MS Teams allows them to enhance and underpin the learning experience by providing one-to-one pastoral and education support via mobile or land line telephone.

Gartside comments: "Since 2010 Gamma has provided cost-effective, robust and very flexible connectivity to Solihull College. The recent deployment of Microsoft Teams Direct Routing enabled us to continue using telephony throughout the lockdown, making staff available to students and their parents.

"It has been totally reliable, and gives us excellent reporting data that allows us to proactively allocate lines to people when needed, and remove them when not needed. It's been such a success that we are now considering whether conventional handsets are the way forward for the college or whether we should extend MS Teams functionality across the board."

**David Gartside**  
Solihull College & University Centre



## The Benefits

- SIP telephony yields line, PBX and call savings
- SIP flexibility enables rapid response to changing needs
- SIP robustness delivers disaster recovery assurance
- Gamma MS Teams Direct Routing allows continuity of student tuition and support

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