Manchester Met University is one of the largest higher education institutions in the UK serving approximately 27,000 undergraduates and 8,000 postgraduates from around the world. The University offers circa 320 undergraduate and 240 postgraduate degrees across a wide variety of subjects and faculties.

**Challenge**

The University takes a forward-looking approach to teaching, learning, and creating a holistic student experience including facilities, course delivery, content, support, and environment. Always focused on delivering a “best in class” service, University payment architecture must be supported by a modern, intuitive and technology driven payment platform.

The school’s payment systems must support emerging new customer needs:

• A diverse student body paying their bills from more than 130 countries
• Growing demand for flexible payment plans
• Increasing student expectations to help offset increasing processing costs
• A wide mix of transaction types from tuition, housing, and University eStore, to donations, on-campus membership fees, printing, library fines, and merchandise
• Supporting the University branded prepayment card (called “The Met Card”)

These myriad systems created a lot of complexity and friction for students as well as University staff. There were different systems for international and domestic payments, creating unnecessary costs for students, limited options to use local currencies or preferred payment methods, and a high degree of assistance required by University staff to help students complete payments and reconcile them in the University’s accounting systems.

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**Manchester Met University**

**Implements a New Payment Model to Optimise the Student Experience**

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**RESULTS**

- **Student self-service**
  reduces manual intervention by staff and allows students to control the payment experience

- **Increased payment plan enrollment**
  40% higher volume of instalment plans reduces collection costs and improves cash flow

- **Flexible payment choice**
  results in the secure processing of more than 25,000 transactions in 60+ currencies across 130+ countries

- **Centralised payment platform**
  unifies disparate systems to improve student experience
Solution

As Manchester Met looked to upgrade its payments infrastructure, it turned to Flywire. The University has been working with Flywire since 2015 to streamline international payments, and wanted to upgrade to Flywire’s Comprehensive Receivables Solution to address a wide variety of needs for its diverse and growing student body, including:

**Flexible Payment Choice**

International students attending UK Institutions are typically encouraged to transfer funds to the UK in order to pay their fees in domestic sterling. But that comes at an extra cost. With Flywire, students are now able to securely pay their education expenses quickly and conveniently online. Direct access to Flywire’s global payment network, provides students with more local currency options, linked directly to their preferred payment choices. So, a student paying from China can now easily pay through Alipay, UnionPay Card, or bank transfer — all via local currency payment, thereby reducing the need to transfer funds to the UK, which often results in short payments being received.

Payment choice is also important for domestic students. By offering a range of flexible options at the front end of the payment setup process, the University helps payers make informed decisions, built on choices that align to their personal circumstances.

Where the University previously had to maintain different systems for domestic and international payments, Flywire’s Comprehensive Receivables Solution ensures every student engages through the same single payment journey.

**Automated Self-Service**

Students wanted more control over their payment journey and the University wanted to lessen the burden on its own finance team. All of the products within Flywire’s solution have embedded self-serve functionality, that removes the need for manual interventions by finance personnel. Students are now able to easily and securely access their financial account to see fees paid, payment methods used, transaction dates and more. They can also automatically change their payment method during the academic year without having to contact the University.

**Payment Plans**

Manchester Met wanted to help ease the financial burden on students. By incorporating Flywire’s payment plan capability into its online payment portal, the University has seen a 40% increase in installment plan enrolment. The ability for students to directly access payment plan options has helped the University increase cash flow with £2M in pre-payments and through its intuitive payment plan structures have established £500K in prior year debt plans in the first three months.

We are delivering a customer experience that includes an enriched payment solution for everyone — students, payers and University staff alike. The feedback we are receiving is tremendous and it will only get better as we continue to build out the solutions in partnership with Flywire.

Paul Sheil | Head of Finance Service Centre | Manchester Met University
Integrating Existing Systems
The University has implemented 23 different payment integrations through Flywire to connect all aspects of the student experience. These include one-time tuition and housing payments, instalment payment plans, donations, sports memberships, loan repayments, printing, library fines, payment card top-ups, guarantee stage payments, and refunds.

eStore
In addition, Manchester Met is using Flywire’s eStore to create an online marketplace where different University departments can now easily brand and offer goods and services through a common experience. A wide range of customers can now securely purchase goods and services as well as register for events. The store also incorporates the University Met Card, a prepaid cashless gift card, allowing students to spend credit through the eStore, a change that has been long overdue and delivered by Flywire in the first few months.

Payment Dashboard
The Flywire Dashboard is a reporting tool that allows the University finance team to monitor payments across all integrations at various payment stages. This helps project cash flow, identify bottlenecks, and address any problems in a timely manner.

Results
Today, Flywire is Manchester Met’s sole payment partner. This consolidation is delivering significant performance, cost, and efficiency improvements. Working from a single, integrated platform ensures alignment of payment systems and the University’s finance system. There is far less intervention required by University staff and payment reconciliation is much easier. The University has also future-proofed its payment integrations. As new payment methods are added worldwide, these become part of the existing offering to payers.

Additional outcomes as a result of the enhanced Flywire integration include:

- 75% of payers have now engaged directly with the University’s new online payment portal, much higher than in previous years.
- Payment plan adoption has increased by 40%, reducing the level of outstanding receivables and improving cash flow visibility while helping to alleviate student stress.
- The University received £2M in additional payments in the first year resulting solely from students having better payment access and visibility.
- £2.6M in full payments were received through online enrollment – as a result of Flywire’s direct payment integration.
- Since 2015, Manchester Met has securely processed over 25,000 payments in 60+ currencies across 130+ countries for a total of more than £150M over the Flywire network.

Furthermore, where Flywire has provided specific integrations outside the standard fee structures (e.g., sports, printing, payment cards) the feedback has been very positive as well. In the words of James Cooley, Facility Manager at the Platt Lane Sports Complex, “Moving to Flywire has allowed my team the ability to support our members in real time. Being able to access user accounts provides the ability to answer customer queries quickly and efficiently without having to wait for a third-party response.”

The Flywire team has been super responsive and extremely engaging at every stage of our complex integration, nothing is ever too much trouble. In our competitive world, we are delighted to partner with Flywire, who recognise the value of having strong tailor-made solutions that drive significant improvements in the customer journey.

Paul Sheil | Head of Finance Service Centre | Manchester Met University