TOP-TEC Case Study:
University of Wolverhampton
Emergency & Disaster Planning (SA063, Learning Room 3) - Telford Innovation Campus
The University of Wolverhampton is the ‘University of Opportunity’ and aspires to be one of the leading inclusive Higher Education Institutes in the UK. It boasts a rich heritage, having provided students with a first-class education for over 180 years. Today, it houses more than 23,000 students and staff over five main campuses throughout Wolverhampton.

The University vision is to ‘put students at the centre of all we do’, which is reflected in their commitment to provide the best facilities available, enhancing the student learning experience in whatever way they can.

This has resulted in continuous renovation projects throughout the University, including a recent £700,000 refurbishment program at the Telford Innovation Campus. Several outdated classrooms had been selected for transformation into new learning spaces, including a new ‘Emergency & Disaster Planning’ area, located in (SA063, Learning Room 3).

**Background**

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**Emergency & Disaster Planning**  
(SA063, Learning Room 3)  
Telford Innovation Campus

**The Brief**

The current classroom had little to no integrated technology, only featuring rows of standard desks, resulting in students bringing in their own IT devices and having nowhere to charge them.

The layout of the furniture also limited tutors to traditional classroom teaching only.

From the beginning of the project, Matthew Flower, Head of AV Infrastructure at the University, expressed one key objective; to provide students and teachers with an increased variety of learning spaces to choose from throughout the campus.

For Learning Room 3, Matthew had a clear idea of what needed to be achieved. He required a different style of learning space to traditional classrooms, and wanted to introduce collaborative style tables to encourage group and Active Learning. TOP-TEC were tasked with maximising the use out of the area to provide space for as many students as possible, whilst still maintaining an effective collaborative working environment.

Desktop power and data modules were needed in each worktop, alongside an integrated microphone.
and space for a telephone. An enclosure was required beneath the worktop for a preselected PC model, along with a camera shelf for the implementation of a brand-new ‘two-way lecture’ format, enabling tutors to connect remotely to the classroom using video conferencing.

The Solution

Having supplied technical furniture solutions for a number of projects, the University of Wolverhampton knew our pedigree and had previously experienced our ability to integrate technology into our furniture solutions. They were also aware of our customisation capabilities and in-house manufacturing processes, and were confident that they could achieve exactly what they wanted using TOP-TEC as a furniture partner.

TOP-TEC provided a series of 2D room plans of the space, and after several meetings, a final room layout was agreed upon with our Synergy Collaborative table range chosen as the most suitable option. The University liked the fact that the tables encouraged collaboration between users and were impressed with the wide range of configurations available.

A series of 5 and 7-seat Synergy Reverse Plectrum tables were selected providing space for up to 31 students at any one time. The Reverse Plectrum was chosen due to the shape encouraging screen focus and allowing all contributors to be seen during live video conferencing sessions.

Equality Act compliance was also important when installing the furniture solutions, leading to the inclusion of a height adjustable section at the end of each table to accommodate users with different height requirements. The ability to raise the end of the table also offered the added benefit of being able to present to the group when completing problem-based learning or offering feedback.
Each table featured a 55” screen, camera shelf, PC enclosure, integrated microphone, telephone and power & data modules.

A Bravo+ HA lectern was also installed at the front of the classroom to be used as a control point for the AV in the room. The lectern featured a 12U rack, flexible monitor arm, bespoke control panel housing and a fully height adjustable worktop.

During one of the project meetings, the University expressed a desire to incorporate their brand colours into the room. TOP-TEC successfully colour matched the Synergy’s edge banding and seating upholstery to the University logo colours, showcasing our ability to adapt to the customer’s specific requirements. Continuing the brand identity, the Bravo+ HA lectern also featured an illuminated logo.

Remote VC with Lecturers & Tutors

The integrated video conferencing feature enabled the University to deliver an exciting new learning format into the classroom. Utilising the StarLeaf VC system, lecturers are able to connect with students remotely from anywhere in the world.

This technology is the first of its kind in any University in the UK at classroom level, enabling students to gain invaluable one-to-one time with experienced tutors.

This demonstrated the flexibility of our Technical Furniture solutions, allowing the University to take this innovate new idea and easily implement it using the Synergy range as a platform.
The Result

Since the installation, the room has become one of the most popular on campus. The Synergy Collaborative Tables allow for group work but also facilitate traditional classroom learning within the same space, all supported by the latest AV technology seamlessly integrated into the tables. The space actively promotes collaborative and group working within the space and the benefits can be seen through the daily seminars and remote video conferencing lectures.

The feedback we have received since the launch has been extremely positive, in particular the bright University brand colours within the room. It is now seen as a space that is enjoyable for everyone to work in and one that lecturers and students alike can be proud of.

The Outcome

“The design of SA063 has given the University the ideal platform on which to introduce leading technology-based solutions to support the delivery of innovative and effective learning. As well as enhanced audio-visual technology, the facility also benefits from an industry leading video-conferencing solution.

A key building block in enabling this has been the furniture from TOP-TEC. Their solutions have allowed the University to realise its vision of delivering effective and innovative teaching in this space, but importantly to also be able to support effective group-based collaboration.”

Matthew Flower
Head of AV Infrastructure
University of Wolverhampton, Telford Innovation Campus

“The Synergy Reverse Plectrum tables allowed for the room to be designed with inclusivity in mind; the ability to raise the end of the table for access further offered the pedagogical benefit when completing problem-based learning or group feedback.”

James Pearson-Jenkins
Head of Academic Innovation
University of Wolverhampton