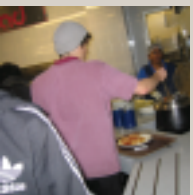
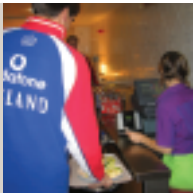




# Loughborough scores with cashless



**Loughborough University is at the forefront of a cashless payment revolution where students pay for meals without traditional notes and coins.**



Over 26,000 meals are served each week using an electronic cashless card as part of a breakfast, lunch and evening meal service at the Leicestershire-based campus which is internationally acclaimed for its excellence in teaching, research and consultancy, particularly in sport.

The 410-acre site - the base for the England and Wales Cricket Board and The FA Women's National Player Development Centre - has

some exciting plans for the cashless system which will be used for nutritional meal analysis and website interaction as part of a major roll out programme involving retail units as well as all dining halls.

Loughborough teamed-up with leading cashless payment specialist VMC to introduce the new service that initially involves more than 1,500 students purchasing their meals in advance, as part of their general fees, at a discounted rate.



Loughborough University's Operations Support Manager, Nik Hunt said the new system was introduced following a visit to Harvard University in Massachusetts, the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States.

"I think introducing cashless was a bold and visionary move," he remarked. "Part of it stemmed from a visit by our Operations Director to Harvard University, where they operate a similar cashless system and a forward thinking website where nutritional analysis and buying meals are available on line."



He continued: "I am not aware of any other University in the UK that is making the same kind of steps that we are - taking a leap to develop and promote health & well-being initiatives".



Loughborough is home to 13,000 students and 3,000 staff. An initial order of 3,500 cards was placed with VMC of which about 1,700 have been issued so far. There are two main cards in operation, one a diners card for students on a meal plan and a diners+ card for self catered students or those that wish to top up their meal plan with a discounted meal scheme.

Nik added: "There's also a third user group in the University's Elite Sports division who use "Tracker" cards where in addition to making meal purchases, their food choice is recorded for future nutritional analysis.

"In terms of the University's reputation for sporting excellence, this type of information is critical," said Nik. "The two groups already using Tracker are the England and Wales Cricket Board who have their national academy on site and The FA Women's National Player Development Centre who have players studying and training here."

He continued: "In the future we are also planning to offer all students this opportunity of food analysis on our redeveloped website, whilst combining access control with cashless payment is another possible option further down the line."

The VMC system is a world away from the University's previous catering operation where students gained entrance to catering halls via a cumbersome turnstile to authorise their access.

Nik added: "There were a number of reasons for going cashless. The first was that we felt the turnstile barriers were very confrontational. There were maintenance issues with them and students would also try and take food that was in addition to their pre-paid meal entitlements.

"This new system has given us greater management information, more flexibility and a revenue stream that we did not have before. Students can now purchase items in addition to their meal allowances."

The technology went live in October 2005 and was installed without any real disruption - bringing a host of benefits, according to Nik.

"One of the biggest changes we have noticed is that more and more people are coming through and are able to pay for extra items. There have been some questions from students about why we have introduced this technology and we have had to explain that this is the first stage of future development of a cashless system, not just in the dining halls but across the retail outlets as well."

In a bid to combat the issue of lost cards, the University is working with VMC to develop a card that can be attached to key rings - as part of a close working relationship.

Nik concluded: "The new system starts to take away the amount of cash you have to audit and count and it also helps to up sell because if people are buying into a package they are more likely to use it and it also breeds customer loyalty. Cashless ties in very nicely with what we were doing anyway with improving our till set-ups, better menu planning, nutritional analysis, trends and eating habits. It's all interlinked and we firmly believe this is the future and definitely the way forward."



## Contacting VMC

VMC (UK) Ltd  
VMC House  
Northfield Road  
Southam  
Warwickshire  
United Kingdom  
CV47 0FG

T: 01926 816400  
www.vmc Ltd.co.uk  
sales@vmc Ltd.co.uk