



## Case Study: Queen Mary University

### High expectations

When Queen Mary University launched Unibuddy, they had high expectations. They saw the platform as an opportunity to engage more with their prospective students, to enhance their reputation as an open, accessible university, and to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

They had long recognised the value of their ambassadors, making strong use of them at Open Days, school visits and UCAS Fairs. They wanted to give them a voice and make them even more approachable.

And of course they hoped for impact, not just on the quality of every applicant's journey, but on the numbers of students applying and accepting their offers.



*"We recognise just how valuable honest, student-led content can be to the university decision-making process. Generation Z are looking for more than rankings and static information; they want to get a feel for a university and engage directly with its student community."*

**Amy Downes, UK Student Recruitment Officer**

### So what did they do?

Queen Mary launched with Unibuddy in Spring 2017. They had an abundance of well-trained ambassadors, and chose 30 to pilot the platform. They embedded Unibuddy on their website and put in clear, high profile links on the main navigation elements of their website.

The conversations started: questions from students making their final UCAS choices; students who had accepted their place, looking for support and reassurance with their preparations to come to London to study; and students from across the world starting to make their first enquiries about study.

The conversation topics were extensive and wide ranging; detailed questions about the course content and teaching style, chats about the accommodation, and discussions on life in East London. What they all had in common was a focus on the real student experience. Prospective students wanted to know what life and study was actually like at Queen Mary - from someone who was experiencing it first-hand.

## What was the impact?

In their first six months, nearly 800 students used Unibuddy. 30.6% were existing applicants for this 2017, with the remainder new enquirers to the university. Some came to ask a question or two, while others stayed, chatted and developed a fantastic dialogue with the ambassadors.

The impact on enrolment was significant. Students who used Unibuddy and had accepted their offer were **34.8% more likely to enrol** than those who did not.

Perhaps most importantly, the students love using the platform. In a survey of users, 100% said that using Unibuddy had made them feel more positively about Queen Mary.

*“My experience with Unibuddy has been absolutely amazing! It has been so useful interacting with students studying the same subject as me and receiving advice and tips from those who were in my position a few years back. The students have shared their invaluable experiences and insights with me as a student at Queen Mary, which gave me the inspiration and confidence before I even started my course!”*

**Applicant, BSc Economics and Finance**

## Expectations met. Now everyone wants to be involved!

Unibuddy has created a real buzz across the University, and the next steps are to expand the platform and double the number of ambassadors. All 14 academic schools plan to have ambassadors on the platform by early 2018. Their International Office are training up international ambassadors to meet the high levels of demand from overseas. Unibuddy will be embedded into their social media planning, and messages about the platform will be built into their applicant communications and Open Day follow-up.

A final word from Queen Mary...

*“The best things about Unibuddy? The fact that applicants can login and ask questions whenever they want, no matter where they are in the world. The platform breaks down traditional barriers between current and prospective students and creates an informal space for them to chat. It’s also been fantastic to see what really matters to students at each stage of their journey; what their concerns and worries are. We’ll be using these insights to improve the information and support we provide in the future.*



*Our ambassadors understand just how influential these conversations can be, and they really enjoy helping students at this crucial stage of life.”*

**Alison Hartshorn, Head of UK Recruitment**

Why not have a look at the Queen Mary unibuddy page at:

[www.qmul.ac.uk/unibuddy](http://www.qmul.ac.uk/unibuddy)

unibuddy.co