

Case study:

China link boosts global recruitment

How Jisc helped improve the point-to-point link between the University of Hull and its China office – contributing to a rise in student recruitment

The challenge: connectivity issues at a China recruitment office

For the University of Hull, China is an important market: the university recruits hundreds of students from the country each year. To help this effort, it has a permanent office in Shanghai with a team of six led by China office director Laura Liu.

To recruit students effectively, the China office needs good, point-to-point connectivity back to the university's student information system, hosted in Hull. "It needs to have the same access to key business systems that any other office in the university has," explains the university's Director of ICT, John Hemingway.

But in the second half of 2014, Hemingway became aware that the China office was suffering from outages and connectivity issues – and started looking for an answer.

The solution: assured connectivity from Jisc

After experience in an earlier role, Hemingway was aware of the work Jisc was doing in brokering deals to provide international connectivity via the Janet network – so he suggested his team approach us.

Jisc was able to broker a deal to route traffic via CERNET, the national research and education network in China – in order to help improve connectivity for the recruitment office in Shanghai.

Benefits to staff and students: more efficient recruitment

From the point of view of the Shanghai recruitment office, better connectivity via CERNET has meant a more efficient admissions process, reducing duplication of effort and shortening the time it takes to issue an offer to students.

The improved connectivity means the office can offer a convenient "one-stop shop" service to Chinese students, says Liu; as part of this, the office provides services locally to meet students' concerns – in areas such as initial queries, applications, admissions, and pre-departure – and also provides information to partners and agencies.

Recruitment, meanwhile, has risen. "Some 480 students are newly recruited for the September 2016 intake," says Liu, "a big increase from 280 the previous year." Good UK-China connectivity has "contributed a lot" to this increase, she says.

Benefits to the organisation: assurance and value for money

From an IT point of view, Hemingway is happy that he can rely on Jisc to ensure he gets the connectivity Hull needs – reducing potential hassle for his team. By working with Jisc, he explains, he can be assured that deals are in place with reputable providers and that if there are problems, he can call on Jisc.

This proved valuable in 2016 when the office suffered severe latency issues, which was ultimately traced to the way the office was using its software. Jisc helped diagnose the problem, working together with CERNET and Hull's ICT team. "That's the sort of issue that can arise," says Hemingway, "but Jisc worked with us to ensure we recovered point-to-point connectivity."

"I would like to thank the Janet network and CERNET for their constant and collective effort on helping the customer in problem-solving," adds Liu.

The other benefit is value for money. "Jisc, with the Janet network, offers institutions a very compelling proposition in terms of value [in the UK]," says Hemingway. "For China it was no different."

