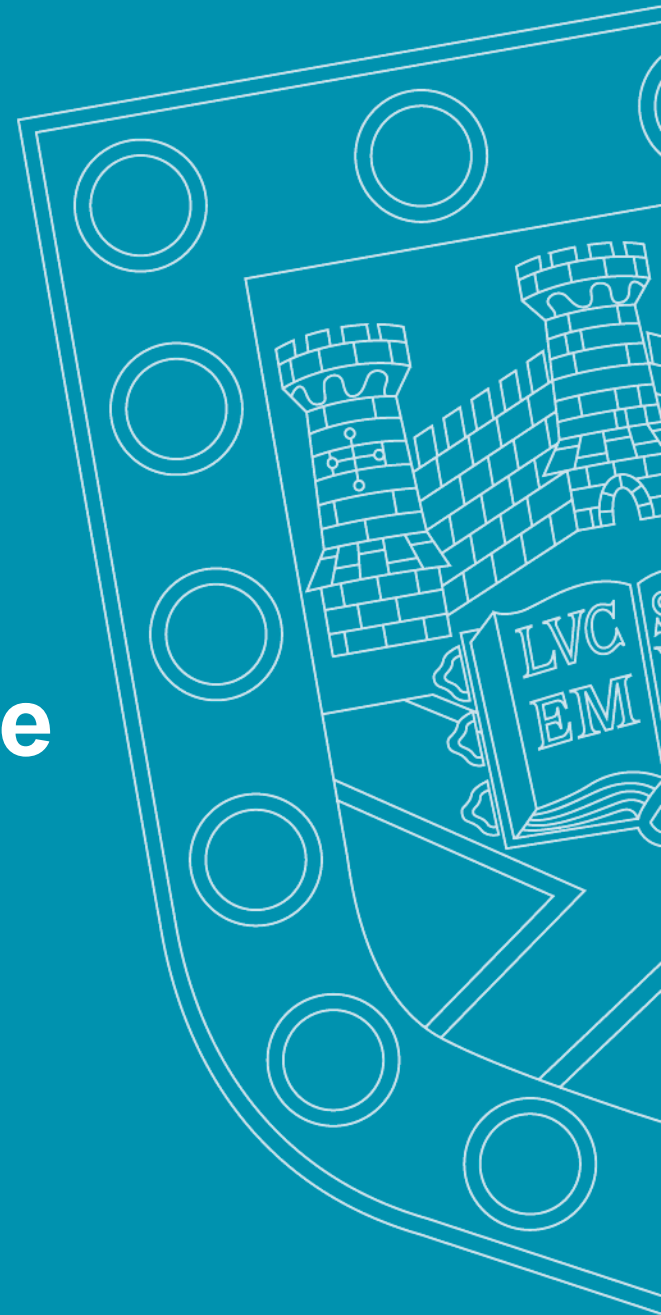


# Double Trouble: Doing Results Day Twice - How We Survived and What We Learned

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## EXETER ADMISSIONS

- ❑ We manage over 40,000 UG applications a year and over 33,000 PG
- ❑ We are centralised for UG and PGT with PGR co-located
- ❑ UG processing is heavily automated (SITS); PG much less so
- ❑ We manage a complex portfolio of electronic communications articulating with CRM and our campaigns team – managed separately but working very closely with us
- ❑ We work hand in glove with a startling array of professional services including Accommodation, Planning, Registry and UKVI all of whom faced a perfect storm in 2020

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# PRE-COVID CHALLENGES

- Enquiry volume and management
- Integrated communications plans
- PGT application volume
- PGT systems development and streamlining
- Optimising admissions tactics and market positioning (UG and PGT)
- Diversity – contextual admissions (UG)

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## HOW DID COVID IMPACT?

- ❑ Enquiries soared sky high – of all descriptions and flavours
- ❑ Communications were a roller-coaster but live chat and our new chat bot were a massive success
- ❑ Despite its own challenges, PGT went on the backburner for a month while the whole team supported UG
- ❑ Scenario modelling took over from predictive modelling
- ❑ We have become more risk averse with 2021 UG offer volume and tactics
- ❑ Institutional engagement with UG diversity/WP is greater but nationally the 2021 cohort still needs much more support with the admissions journey

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## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- We are confident that we can cope with the odd 'snow day' now!
- It helps to have good FAQs and written information but you can say too much as well as too little
- Applicants, families and advisers still want some form of personal contact: multi-channel comms is one of the big themes for the future
- Have a Plan A, B, C and D especially for things involving software providers - your contract is worth nothing in the moment if things go wrong. However much you enjoy the fantasy of seeing 'them' in court, that is very unlikely to happen and you are still holding the baby!
- Fair Admissions REALLY matters to us and to the country

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## ON THE FRONT LINE...

- ❑ In military studies, there is an age-old debate about why soldiers fight
- ❑ The received wisdom used to be that the primary motivation was to support comrades – the ‘brothers in arms’ perspective
- ❑ Patriotism is now unfashionable but more recent studies show that most armies *do* fight with and because of some version of this
- ❑ Like the military historians, I thought for years that what matters most to me in my work is my team. It does - powerfully
- ❑ BUT in the summer of 2020 I *cried* because of what I heard on the news; I wrote WONKE articles about the applicant position; an introvert became an activist

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## WHY?

- Because Fair Admissions matters - this is 'my creed' and what motivates me alongside my contribution to the team
- But what does it mean? Is it about principles or practice?
- Fair Admissions is not an ideology or a set of absolutes
- Admissions is a craft rather than an art – it takes skilled practical application and sometimes you have to choose the 'least worst' outcome from a set of options none of which are ideal
- In the summer, we did the *best* we could for as *many* applicants as we could and that was enough
- Are we doing the best we can for 2021?

# Any Questions?

