



Case study:

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Sector: Further education

Location: University of Plymouth

Client: University Partnerships Programme (UPP), University of Plymouth

Completion date: Stage One August 2007, final completion due 2008

Value: £31 million

Description: Construction of new student accommodation and higher education academic facilities at James Square, in the centre of the University of Plymouth campus. The new project is being carried out under the design and build framework agreement between Cowlin and the University Partnerships Programme (UPP), and is one of the first public-private partnerships for the university.

The scheme involves the development and operation of 80,000 sq ft of the university's future academic requirements, including a lecture theatre, teaching spaces, library and support offices and a new refectory, intended primarily for the university's Faculty of Education.

The £31 million project incorporates three sections of new build or refurbishment



project works, including the refurbishment of the existing Mary Newman building, the construction of the new residential unit, and the new academic block.

The new academic development will include 329 new en-suite study bedrooms in a building central to the university's campus, as well as refurbishment and upgrading of the existing Mary Newman building, which will be converted from academic space to residential accommodation, providing a further 126 rooms.



What do YOU think?

Mike Phipps – Retired Bursar, University of Bristol

Q. From your point of view, what are the main benefits of having a framework agreement in place for construction?

A. We gain tremendous value from having a lasting relationship with contractors who then understand the type of facilities we build and hopefully the design of issues involved. They also get to know our processes and, critically, we develop a degree of trust in each other so that problems get aired and shared rather than left to fester.

Q. Can you give me an example of how this has worked best at your University?

A. We have a close relationship with several companies the size of Cowlin which means that they get fairly regular business – thus getting a better hit rate in tenders. Also, Cowlin in particular knows where it can add value by suggesting savings and developments and thus we get a better tender – we have not yet taken the lowest bid for many years because we have the confidence in our ability to forge a good partnership with our contactors. The lowest price is often the one containing the most risk for both parties. In essence, I see the process as eliminating risk and surprises for everyone.

Q. What are the potential issues with framework agreements?

A. I only have one issue with frameworks, but this doesn't arise with Cowlin. My issue is that contactors will still on occasion decide not to tender for a job – for perhaps good reasons of their own. This is not in the spirit of long term relationships and has nearly broken relationships with contractors in the past. Cowlin will always indicate, very early on, if they have a problem with resourcing a job/tender, so we know where we are. They have never once pulled out of a tender whilst others have.



For further information about construction for the education sector or other Cowlin projects, visit www.cowlin.co.uk or telephone 0117 983 2000

Cowlin

Insight

Hugh Dalton, Divisional Marketing Director at Cowlin provides some insight into Cowlin's activity in the education sector:

“ We have seen continued growth in the number of education contracts in the Cowlin portfolio over the past 12 months. This is indicative of a steady growth in education contracts currently available in the UK and Cowlin is pleased to be at the heart of this increase.

The education sector currently comprises approximately 50% of Cowlin's turnover

Construction in education is seen as an opportunity for growth – there will be significant investment during the next 10 years. For example, the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme has outlined that the government will spend £6.3 billion on schools in 2007-08.

The private sector is playing its part too – total private sector investment in modernising schools has now exceeded £3.6 billion, with more than 100 Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts signed, covering over 800 schools.

The education sector currently comprises approximately 50% of Cowlin's turnover and we are at the forefront in providing leading education facilities in our operating area. Consequently, we enjoy solid repeat business given the expertise and track record we possess.

Our involvement extends beyond traditional schools to highly technical research facilities, student accommodation and sporting and leisure facilities.”



Cowlin's considerable experience within the education sector encompasses a wide variety of educational establishments from Higher Education through to Primary and Secondary schools.

Projects include the construction of major new faculty facilities for regional University departments, new school buildings and facilities, state-of-the-art learning resource centres for local schools and extensive refurbishment and remodelling of existing accommodation to provide modern teaching facilities.

During the past 12 months Cowlin has developed an extensive portfolio of contracts in the growing education sector, including:

- Two schools for Bristol City Council – a £31 million school in Redland and the Fairfield School, worth £16 million.
- An £11 million contract for Filton College in Bristol.
- A Gwalia Housing contract at the University of Bangor to build £30 million of student accommodation.
- A £31 million UPP project at the University of Plymouth, including student accommodation and teaching facilities.
- A Privately Funded Initiative (PFI) comprehensive school in Maesteg Wales, worth £17 million.

The two year build of Redland Green School in Bristol was recently completed in time for the 2007 school term. Cowlin spent 24 months transforming the former playing field into a high-tech, modern building, providing state-of-the-art educational facilities to 1,500 local pupils.



Case study:

MERCHANTS' ACADEMY

Sector: Secondary education

Location: Withywood, Bristol

Client name: Merchants' Academy

Completion date: September 2008

Value: £23 million

Description:

A new school will replace the existing Withywood Community School, including the construction of a new Academy building with state-of-the-art technological facilities, increased community use, and an excellent sporting facility.

Work on the project commenced in January 2007 and upon completion of the first phase in summer 2008, will provide more than 1,000 student places. The school is sponsored by the Society of Merchant Venturers and co-sponsored by the University of Bristol.



Cowlin: Working with schools across the South West

Cowlin's largest education contract in Wales – Maesteg Comprehensive School

Case study:

MAESTEG COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Sector: Secondary education

Location: Maesteg, Wales

Client: Babcock & Brown

Completion date: September 2008

Value: £17 million

Description:

Cowlin is constructing a new 1,200 pupil comprehensive secondary school to replace the current split-site school in Maesteg. The new facility is being constructed on a reclaimed site, previously a coal mine washery.

The project includes construction of a sports hall and extensive highways works to provide suitable access. The design uses traditional foundations with steel frame and pre-cast upper floors, masonry rendered and cladding façade, with a standing seam roof. The new Maesteg Comprehensive is due to open for the start of the new school year in 2008.

Going Further in Education

Cowlin continues to develop its expertise in the further education sector. Its portfolio includes projects for the University of West of England, Cornwall College's Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) and various contracts as part of a long-standing relationship with the University of Bristol spanning five years, worth £40 million.

Cowlin recently completed a brand new art and design facility for the University of the West of England's (UWE) School of Art, Media and Design on the Bower Ashton campus. The £4.2 million project is part of a 10 year plan of campus improvement to replace the existing arts-based facilities and to allow further development of the site.

Cowlin provided teaching facilities and a food technology centre at the existing Duchy College site in Stoke Climsland near Callington, for Cornwall College's Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC). Valued at £3.2 million, the project formed part of a Centre for Vocational Excellence for food and drink technologies in the south west.

Cowlin completed yet another contract with the University of Bristol in 2007, marking a significant

long-standing relationship. The project included refurbishing the university's West Block Chemistry department, an £8 million contract completed in January 2007. Working in partnership with the university, Cowlin has been instrumental in a major proportion of the re-development of the education facilities there for the past five years, with contracts valued upwards of £40 million. Other work undertaken by Cowlin at the University of Bristol includes the refurbishment of its Medical School, South Block Chemistry Building and the Medical Sciences Building, as well as the design and construction of the seven-storey Dorothy Hodgkin building, a new centre for medical research. Likewise, the company has undertaken many schemes outside of the university precinct at the Langford Campus.



UWE Bower Ashton campus

Insight

Hugh Dalton, Divisional Marketing Director at Cowlin comments about the opportunities working with further education establishments in the UK:



Hugh Dalton

“ Within the education sector, Cowlin has developed strong relationships with universities and further education establishments across the region and several projects have involved a phased approach to development, resulting in long-term contracts to complete various builds over several years.

Our relationship with universities and further education establishments doesn't stop at campus buildings and facilities – it often involves developing additional buildings like student accommodation and leisure and sporting facilities.

Our market research indicates continued growth in all aspects of further education, extending to significant expansion and development in campuses across the UK. Given the long-standing relationships we have with many universities and colleges in the region, we look forward to building on our success in the sector over the coming years.”