

Lecture theatre seating solutions extended

RESearch by the British Contract Furnishing Association has identified that the greatest factor driving investment in universities is the demand for higher specification learning facilities.

The design of a lecture theatre has a significant influence on the learning experience, says Ferco Seating. A spokesperson said: "It should be optimised for creating an environment which stimulates concentration and interaction and improves learning outcomes. A badly designed lecture theatre does the opposite of encouraging learning, causing even the most attentive of students to lose focus during the lecture."

Universities are looking to future-proof their learning spaces, designing teaching environments that will be able to adapt to the pace of change and imbuing structures with the adaptability to enable subsequent phases of redevelopment or repurposing.

To meet these needs, Ferco Seating

offers clients a flexible approach to lecture theatre design with a portfolio of innovative and engaging products. Ferco design, manufacture and install high quality customised seating for multiple iconic educational establishments including Queens College, Oxford; Clare College, Cambridge and the Cass Business School.

Enhanced learning spaces have been proven to help with student engagement, higher levels of academic attainment and the development of employability skills. Julie Lecoq, a workplace consultant for the global design firm HOK advises 'Simple changes to existing spaces can go a long way to transforming them into more creative, inspiring environments.'

Ferco Seating ranges from traditional lecture seating with fixed writing tablets, to cutting-edge Harvard style, Collaborative Learning and Turn & Learn™ systems.

Ferco seats offer ergonomic and postural support and can be upholstered

in a huge range of fabrics to enhance any design scheme. Desktop and modesty panel choices compliment the chosen aesthetic. All Ferco seating has DDA provision to ensure full inclusivity. The Education Seating Collection can integrate fully with existing or additional power and data points.

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Seating selected for Oxford's Norman Foster Social Sciences building

THE University of Oxford's Manor Road Building, designed by Sir Norman Foster, is home to several units of the Social Sciences Division and the unified Social Science Library. Overlooking the adjacent River Cherwell, the four-storey building is arranged around a central atrium and provides a variety of spaces including an auditorium, lecture theatres, seminar rooms, common areas, staff offices and a canteen.

Working with TOP-TEC, the university has refurbished the IT Room located on the 2nd floor, reconfiguring it to support bring-your-own-device (BYOD), and no longer has individual IT equipment provided in the room. Rows of 3-seat power supply benches are arranged facing the front. This allows the room to be utilised for presentations and seminars if required, for which lecterns, height adjustable desks, screens and projectors are provided. KI's

Strive task chairs have been selected to provide mobile, height-adjustable ergonomic seating for the space.

Chosen for their simple, yet elegant design, these chairs were specified with a black base and warm grey poly shell to complement the room's calm, clean and focussed feel. In addition to these Strive task chairs, matching Learn2 chairs with Strive seat shells were also selected to provide students or presenters with additional, more flexible and collaborative seating. Learn2's ambidextrous, large swivelling tablet arm also accommodates different writing styles and better collaborative working. Its underseat storage allows the user to keep their bags and materials close to hand and off the ground, reducing clutter and trip hazards. All chairs have been enhanced for extra comfort with upholstered seat pads.

Oto Velicka, project manager and deputy senior facilities manager at Oxford University, said: "The Learn2 chairs give the space an added element of reconfigurability. The chair's clever design adds excellent functionality with its storage rack and generous tablet arm – and being able to specify them with matching Strive seats allowed us to maintain a consistent aesthetic throughout."

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