



Softcat Helps Anglia Ruskin University Achieve Smarter Email Security

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The client

Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) is a modern public university with campuses in Cambridge, Chelmsford, Peterborough and London. As one of the largest UK universities, ARU is known for its commitment to inclusive

education, innovation and employability. The university continues to invest in digital transformation to support its academic and administrative communities.

Key facts



The challenge

ARU had reached a point where its existing email security platform was not fulfilling their growing security requirements. The system lacked flexibility, making it hard to implement the kind of nuanced policies needed to protect users without disrupting their experience.

“We weren’t getting the level of protection we wanted against more complex threats like phishing and impersonation,” said Kyle Strudwick, Head of User Infrastructure at ARU. “The platform was difficult to configure and didn’t allow us to strike the right balance between security and usability.”

As the university’s security programme matured, it became clear that student accounts - previously seen as low risk - could be exploited as entry points. Mladen Kirilov, Information Security Manager, explained: “Even a compromised student account could give an attacker a foothold in our network. We needed to expand email protection to all our users, not just staff.”

ARU wanted a solution that could integrate seamlessly with Microsoft 365, offer advanced protection and reduce the burden on its IT teams.

Critical success factors



The Solution

Softcat stepped in to help ARU explore the market and identify the right solution.

Acting as a strategic advisor, Softcat introduced the University to Check Point Harmony Email & Collaboration (HEC) - a cloud-integrated platform offering layered email security powered by AI and behavioural analysis.

“We trialled four vendors in total,” said Kyle. “Softcat helped us narrow down the options and introduced us to Check Point, which we hadn’t considered initially. That gave us confidence when going back to the Board to say we’d done our research and Check Point was the right choice.”

Softcat didn’t just make introductions, they stayed hands-on throughout the process. They coordinated technical

support, extended the proof of concept (POC) period and negotiated commercial terms to make sure the solution fit ARU’s budget. “Check Point’s standard POC is two weeks,” Kyle added, “but we ended up running it for seven or eight weeks thanks to Softcat’s support.”

Deployment was smooth. The university transitioned directly from POC to live production without any downtime. “There was no gap between trial and implementation,” said Mladen. “Check Point recognised that reconfiguring everything from scratch would be inefficient, so they kept the infrastructure live and supported us through the transition.”

Solution highlights



The benefits

“Since implementing Check Point HEC, ARU has seen a noticeable improvement in its email security posture. “We’ve seen a decline in support tickets related to email,” said Kyle. “People are seeing fewer spam messages, and the platform is easier to manage.”

Kyle Strudwick
Head of User Infrastructure at ARU

The self-service features have made a big difference. Users can now release quarantined emails themselves, which has reduced friction and improved productivity. “We’ve seen more restore requests because users are now aware of what’s being blocked,” Kyle explained. “But thanks to automation, the actual workload for our service desk has gone down by around 10 to 15 percent.”

The solution also fits neatly into ARU’s broader strategy around automation, AI and digital trust. “It ticked a lot of boxes for us,” Kyle said. “From low-level technical needs to high-level organisational strategy, it helped us deliver a safer, more reliable experience.”

Benefits at a glance



Why Softcat

“Softcat helped us narrow down the right vendors and gave us confidence in our decision-making,” said Kyle. “They took away time consuming work and let us focus on what mattered.”

Mladen added, “Softcat were great on both the business and technical sides. They helped us evaluate suppliers based on our needs and guided us through the whole process.”