

# CASE STUDY



**Universiteit Utrecht**

"THE MOST EFFICIENT USE OF  
AVAILABLE SPACE"





## General introduction

Utrecht University is a public research university in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Established on the 26th of March 1636, it is one of the oldest universities in the Netherlands. In 2018, it had an enrollment of more than 31,000 students and employed 7,000 faculty and staff. Together, students and top researchers work towards a better world.

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## Overview



As a result of the corona restrictions, Utrecht University no longer had a clear insight into the occupation and utilisation of the spaces on their campus.



Seeing that the occupancy and the number of no-shows needed to be mapped out, the university chose a periodic physical Occupation Study.



The biggest challenge for Utrecht University is to make optimal use of the spaces.



Due to the periodic measurements, Utrecht University is able to compare different terms and make adjustments where necessary.

## Problem

As a result of the corona restrictions, Utrecht University no longer had a clear insight into the occupation and utilisation of the spaces on their campus. They had to adjust their timetable schedules because of COVID-19 and because of the strict measures introduced by the government, and therefore, had a great interest in gaining insight into the actual use of the educational spaces.

## Goal

One of the main goals of Utrecht University is to gain insights into the number of students and their actual use of spaces. With this data, a correct comparison can be made with the timetabling schedules. This comparison provides insight into the no-shows and can be used as input for the scheduling of the next term. This enables timetablers to plan better and more efficiently based on the insights gathered.



## Challenge

The biggest challenge for Utrecht University is to make optimal use of the spaces. The main question is: To what extent are the scheduled spaces actually occupied and utilised?

## Approach

Seeing that the occupancy and the number of no-shows (caused by COVID-19) needed to be mapped out, the university chose a periodic physical Occupation Study: an observation study consisting of 10 days of measuring, adjusted to their timetabling. First, the scope of the measurement was determined and with the use of an inventory, all rooms and spaces were registered. With regard to the scope of the measurement, the choice was made to measure all educational spaces at Utrecht University. This way, it was possible to get a clear overview of the occupancy, use and also the activities that took place on the campus.

10

Days

Measuremen carried out the occupancy measurement for 10 days.

5

Measurements

Five measuring moments were carried out per day, aligned with the timetable.

90

Minutes

Each measurement took 90 minutes.

## Conclusion

After finishing the 10 days of measuring, interesting and useful insights were immediately noticeable. In order to make all the data collected manageable, it was made available in our online platform, The Measurement Portal. This also created an opportunity for Utrecht University to create new insights independently.

An important result that emerged from the study performed, was, for example, that the number of booked rooms often did not correspond to the actual utilisation of the rooms. It also turned out that rooms were being used, even though they were not scheduled. With the use and the combination of the collected data, new insights were created that allowed Utrecht University to eventually make improvements for the next term.

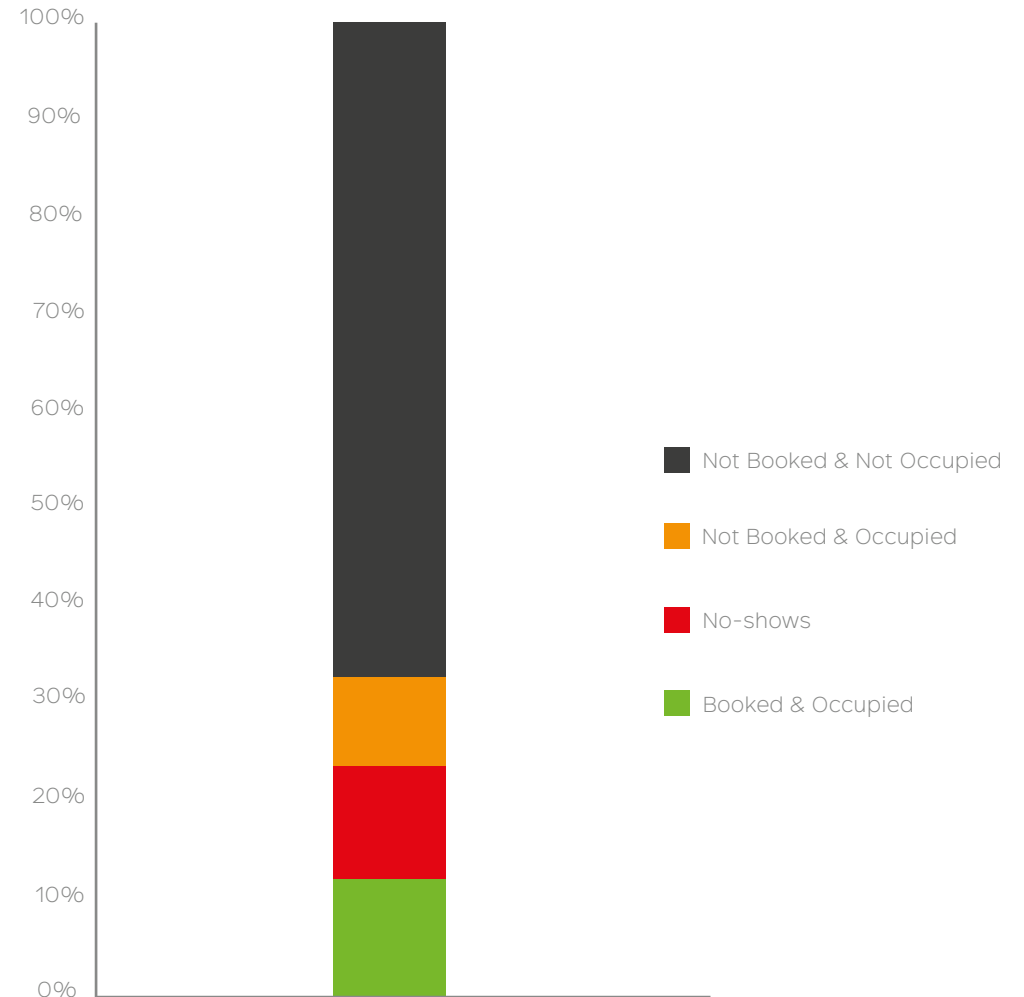


Figure 1. Ratio between the use of rooms to the timetable

## Conclusion

Due to the periodic measurements, Utrecht University is able to compare different terms, draw conclusions from this, and make adjustments where necessary, not only based on the number of scheduled rooms but also the activities carried out on campus. The insights showed that different types of activities took place in all kinds of spaces, even if the space is not intended for that purpose. The data also showed that when the rooms were occupied but not scheduled, self-study was the most common activity. This allows for the conclusion to be made that there is a need for study and collaboration spaces. Collaborating with other students turned out to be the second-largest activity in the university. This may have something to do with the home environment, which does not offer all the facilities that the university does.

All in all, an interesting case with Utrecht University, in which we participated with pride and enthusiasm. It remains a challenging time to optimally facilitate working life for students and lecturers. But by measuring and understanding what is happening within the organisation, one is able to anticipate changes and respond to trends and changing needs.

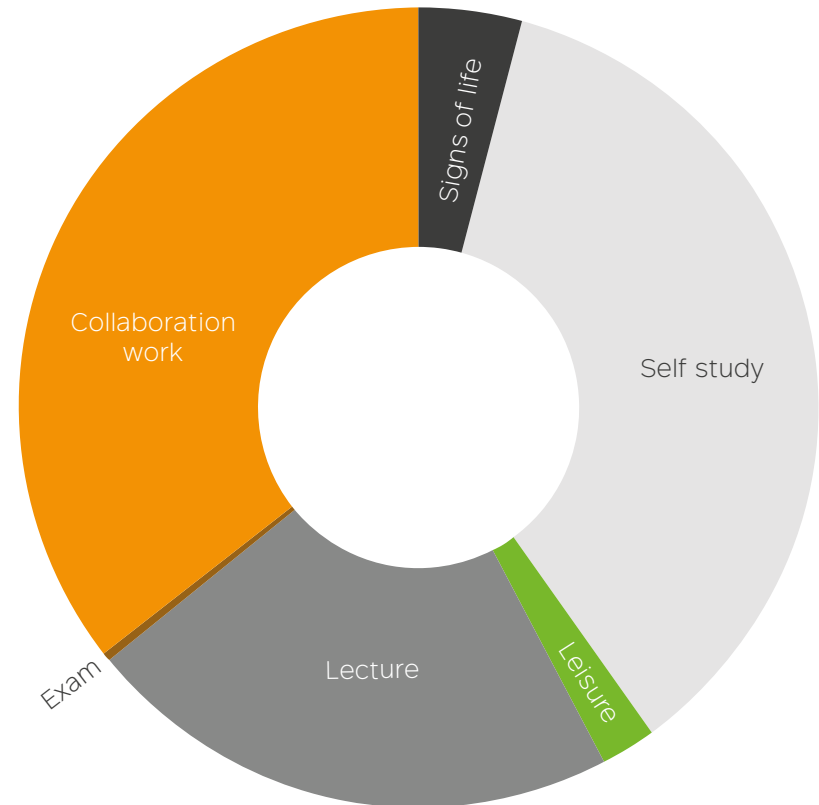


Figure 2. Activities performed on campus

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