



UK Pupils and Students Aren't the Only Ones Feeling Exam Pressure - Universities Are Too, with £2Bn at Stake

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Universities Gearing Up for Clearing in August with More than 80,000 Pupils Expected to Blitz Phonedlines in an Eight-Hour Window

LONDON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun. 30, 2026--

Secondary school exam season has come to an end, but for one group exam-related stress is just beginning to ramp up: university IT departments counting down to Clearing in August.

Last year, [more than 77,000 students entered Clearing](#) looking for a university place - and with each student representing an average of £27,000 in tuition fees, there is approximately £2 billion on the table. For universities, a missed call isn't just a poor experience - it's a direct hit to the bottom line.

Last year's Clearing exposed a stark divide in how universities handled one of the most high-stakes contact days in the academic calendar. When A-level results dropped, students scrambled to secure places - [and many were forced to wait](#) for long periods of time on hold to do so, according to data from [8x8, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: EGHT), a leading global business communications platform provider.

While Clearing technically runs until October, the first few days are critical, with places awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. People who called certain 8x8-supported universities were able to speak to university staff within 8 seconds. Not everyone was so fortunate.

The cost of delay

"The number of applications through Clearing has been growing year on year for some time and it's likely to top above 80,000 people this year - it's an utterly stressful time for applicants," said [James Starvella](#), UK University Lead at 8x8, Inc. "When they are trying to get through they have no idea if they are going to be on the phone for three seconds, three minutes, or three hours in trying to secure the course that could determine the rest of their life. But beyond this, it's a stressful time for the university teams because they want the calls to get through quickly and for people to have a positive experience. Financially though, every dropped call is a costly failure - and one that's utterly preventable."

Helping people achieve their dreams

"It's a tough period, possibly the most intense part of the year, and universities train and plan months in advance," said [Ged Attwood](#), Head of Operations at University of Worcester. "It's worth it in the end though because you want people to get in and be on the course of their dreams. We work hard on this because we don't want to have people being stressed. Last year during the Clearing period, 3,325 calls were taken with an average wait time of 32 seconds. Even more impressively, on the first - and busiest - day, the average wait time was no longer than ten seconds."

The difference across the universities

Based on information available online, including conversations in online newsgroups, social media forums, [comment from Newcastle University](#), the story is of potential long waits and call handling times, depending on the university or education establishment.

- Non-8x8 Clearing supported universities saw waits of more than 18 minutes while call handling times could be similar.
- 8x8 Clearing supported universities saw wait times of less than eight seconds for a call to be answered and total call handling times of around two-eight minutes.

8x8 and Education

More information about how 8x8 helps universities and other educational institutions can be found on the company's customer success page: <https://www.8x8.com/resources/customer-stories>

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Footnote:

1 - The £2bn figure is derived from the following: [UCAS numbers](#) state the 2026/2027 tuition fee per student per year is a maximum of £9,790 per year. When multiplied by three years to reflect a degree-length course, the sum comes to £29,370. When this is multiplied by 80,000 - an estimate of the number of pupils who will apply via Clearing based on publicly available information - the number comes to £2.34Bn.

About 8x8, Inc.

8x8, Inc. (NASDAQ: EGHT) connects people and organizations through seamless communication on one of the industry's most integrated platforms for Customer Experience – combining Contact Center, Unified Communications, and CPaaS solutions. The 8x8® Platform for CX integrates AI to enable personalized customer journeys, drive operational excellence and insights, and facilitate team collaboration. As a business communications leader, the company helps customer experience and IT leaders around the world become the heartbeat of their organizations, empowering them to unlock the potential of every interaction. For additional information, visit www.8x8.com, or follow 8x8 on [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), and [Facebook](#).

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