



Case Study

# 'Ways of Learning are Changing': La Salle Campus Barcelona Gives Students Flexibility to Learn From Anywhere Using Zoom

Students come from around the world to study at La Salle-Ramon Llull University in Barcelona (La Salle). The university has a long history of innovation with technology at its core — class recordings and remote synchronous lessons have been part of the learning experience for years.

In September 2020, La Salle introduced Smart Learning, a new model of education incorporating Zoom into smart classrooms for hybrid instruction. Zoom Rooms-enabled smart classrooms are designed so students can learn from anywhere — in person or remotely — and receive the same high-quality education as if they were on campus.

## Challenge

Like most of the world, La Salle was forced to react quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic, moving classes online in a matter of days in March 2020.

"At that time, we were using Zoom with faculty and had started using Zoom in classes," said Josep Maria Ribes, director of academic affairs at La Salle. "When we had to go remote in April and May, we had to do it so quickly that we used another technology."

As the months went on, the situation remained uncertain. Many students who had gone home during pandemic lockdowns were unable to travel back to La Salle's Barcelona campus.

With a new academic year coming up, school leaders saw an opportunity not just to adapt to the short-term pandemic situation, but also to introduce Zoom as a long-term solution that would bring greater flexibility and personalization to education.

## Solution

Leading up to the 2020-21 academic year, La Salle deployed Zoom Rooms in more than 60 classrooms on the Barcelona campus, transforming them into smart classrooms designed for connectivity.



RAMON LLULL UNIVERSITY

## La Salle-Ramon Llull University, Campus Barcelona

**Founded:** 1903

**Location:** Barcelona

**Industry:** Education

**Challenges:** Enabling educational continuity through hybrid instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic

**Solutions:** Zoom Meetings, Zoom Rooms, Zoom Video Webinars

**Business benefits:** Smart classrooms allowed the university to adapt quickly to pandemic-related restrictions and develop a long-term, flexible hybrid model of education

**"Zoom has given us what we need to provide business continuity and enable student resilience. ...We can deliver a personalized educational experience for each student, no matter their situation."**

**- Josep Maria Ribes**  
*Director of Academic Affairs,*  
*La Salle-Ramon Llull University*

“We decided Zoom was the best option because of the easy, intuitive way to use the technology in the classroom,” Ribes said.

Classrooms have an interactive digital whiteboard, screens that display the active speaker and remote students, an active microphone array, and cameras with automatic detection that track faculty members’ movements. Professors can start a meeting with one touch and share content on the interactive whiteboard with one click. Remote and in-person students can co-annotate on the whiteboard, and professors can save and send content to view later.

The hardware helps create a more inclusive hybrid learning environment. “It allows students to hear, see, and interact with the group in class in the same way as if they’re there,” Ribes explained. “Students can see the professor in action, moving around the classroom, which is much better than the professor teaching at home with a little camera.”

La Salle also began using Zoom Video Webinars to keep its active campus culture alive during the pandemic, hosting student events and cultural activities. Some activities have had small gatherings on campus with more than 1,000 people connecting remotely.

“Zoom technology gives families and students the security that they will have a good academic experience — they can have classes with teachers, connect with other students, and have a direct relationship with the school community,” said Maria Pilar Torné, La Salle’s marketing and admissions director.

## Results

“With the pandemic, nothing is sure,” Torné said.

“[Zoom’s] biggest impact has been allowing us to adapt and offer a different solution to students.”

La Salle’s Smart Learning model allows students and faculty to maintain educational continuity, even as the pandemic situation changes week by week.

“This [academic] year alone, we’ve had to change the scenario three or four times. We started with 90% on campus and 10% with remote presence. One month later, we were 90% off campus and 10% on campus,” Ribes said.

“[With Zoom,] you can have presence on campus or presence off campus. Students can decide what they prefer, and the experience is almost the same being here as being at home,” he continued. “We feel that everybody is part of the same group and can interact easily.”

With more than 4,000 Zoom sessions every month, La Salle relies on Zoom for classes, guest speakers, prospective student events, and staff meetings. Ribes and Torné believe the past few months have marked the beginning of a transformation in how La Salle serves students of the future and how staff and faculty members communicate with one another.

“We have to understand the needs of our students and the new market. People are changing, and ways of learning are changing,” Torné said. “We’re working to understand this change and looking at offering programs that are on campus but give students the flexibility to learn off campus.”

“Zoom has given us what we need to provide business continuity and enable student resilience,” Ribes added. “It allows us to offer assurance that we can deliver a personalized educational experience for each student, no matter their situation.”

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