

CAPITA

Case Study

Edinburgh's Telford College: developing UNIT-e within a new corporate information strategy

“UNIT-e has made a huge difference to the way I work. It has made me review the way we do things”

Phil Watson, Administration Manager, Edinburgh's Telford College



The background

Edinburgh's Telford College, one of the largest colleges in Scotland. When it moved to a new purpose built campus in 2006 it was already formulating a very different vision about how it could function and interact with the community.

The Board of Management felt the College's corporate information systems, including the student records system, failed to meet the standards expected of a modern educational institution. Overall, the College's corporate information systems lacked proper integration, along with limited user access, limited in-house system development and administration support and frequent duplications of data input and reporting. A collection of stand alone in-house systems, developed on an ad hoc basis, also ran alongside the proprietary CIS systems.

The new premises offered widespread access to state-of-the-art technology throughout the student, teaching and staff areas.

Prior to relocation, a comprehensive review of College information systems confirmed that these did not operate to an equivalent level of technical and operational excellence. Therefore these systems failed to meet the College's vision and aspirations.

The CIS Programme

A three year corporate information systems programme was established. It was funded with a remit to comprehensively review and redevelop its networked information systems, including:

- Student record system
- HR system
- Payroll system
- Finance system
- Health & Safety at Work system
- Middleware
- Identity management
- Portal
- Process mapping
- Information mapping

A CIS Team, was formed comprising of an operations team and development team. The Operations Team had principal responsibility for information management and system administration, while the Development Team was responsible for developing and maintaining the new information systems. This CIS Team was created to both take the programme forward and deliver a centralised college support service. The Team managers had considerable prior experience in teaching and other college operations. They were expected to apply their knowledge of the College's business requirements to the redevelopment of its networked information systems.

How Capita became involved

The student record system was the first to undergo review and redevelopment. Having decided to go out to open tender, the College developed an extensive tendering and evaluation process. This led to the procurement of UNIT-e from Capita Further and Higher Education. The College believed that UNIT-e offered the potential to meet its aspirations for corporate information management.

As part of the evaluation process and to ensure that the College was getting the system that best matched its requirements, end-users from the College were involved in assessing UNIT-e and the Capita team. The end-to-end system evaluation and procurement process became the model for all subsequent procurements within the College's CIS Programme.

Commenting on the overall transition, Phil Watson, Administration Manager at the College, adds, **“We've had a lot of support from Capita.”**



Project implementation and development

Following evaluation, the College decided to develop UNIT-e in support of:

Function	Current
Course approval to initialisation	Operational
Fee information	Operational
Course marketing information	Operational
Enquiries	Operational
Applications	Operational
Bursaries and student financial awards	Operational
Course planning and forecasting	Operational
Timetabling	Operational
Registers	Operational
Statutory	Operational
Pre entry customer management	To be developed
Online payment and enrolment	To be developed
Student placements	To be developed
Individual Learning Plans	To be developed
Examinations	To be developed
Customer Relationship Management	To be developed
Graduation	To be developed

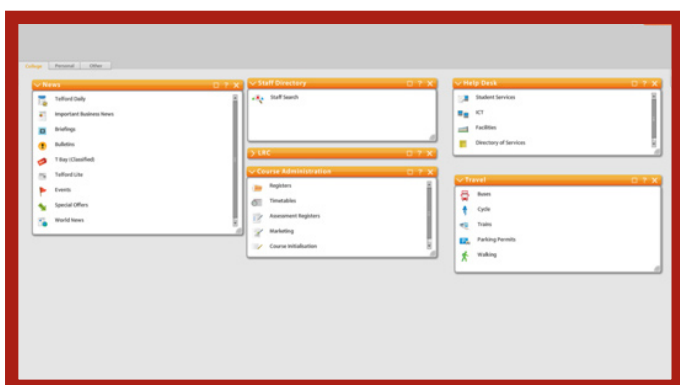
The College will continue to develop functions which have not been fully developed by this time through the CIS Operations and Development Teams realigned within larger mainstream operational services.



The CIS Team used UNIT-e proformas and reports where these met operational requirements. It also developed its own interfaces and applications when required. Custom-built UNIT-e applications include:

- Course enquiries
- Course initialisation
- Course marketing information
- Timetabling
- Web online enquiries and applications

Online course administration applications are made accessible to users via the College's new Staff Portal:



The results

The Portal enables users to select from a group of individual modules that can be arranged and sized onscreen as required. A course administration module provides the single point of online access to registers, marketing information, timetables and course initialisation – all held within UNIT-e. Further online course administration applications will be incorporated into this module when developed, providing a single point of access for academic staff.

Phil Watson believes the initial impact of the new system became evident in the use of the registers. She comments **"This opened up the system to everybody and allowed us all to see that it is the College's system not any one person's."**

Overall Phil is very pleased with the progress that has been made. **"The information and data we can extract in management terms is good. We can extract data from the system ourselves as and when we want it. Report Generator is a great help."**

She is also enthusiastic about the working relationship with Capita Further and Higher Education. She comments, **"Capita FHE is very helpful all round and provides us with excellent support throughout. The User Group is also good and very supportive, especially for new users."**

However, the scope of the cultural change and the pace of implementation has presented a challenge to system users. As Donald Steele, former Corporate Information Services Manager, comments, **"At Edinburgh's Telford College it's been recognised that we have in effect tried to fit a five year implementation into three years. We've been very ambitious with our Corporate Information Systems Programme and the sheer pace of development has presented difficulties. This is something that we've now taken on board and are working to resolve."**

While there is no doubt that a number of people are still coming to terms with the new ways of working it is equally clear that many others have positively embraced the changes.

The Edinburgh's Telford College webcast on the Capita FHE website (www.capita-fhe.co.uk) provides different users' perspectives on what the system can do for individual staff and students, and for the College as a whole.

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