

Case Study

University College for the Creative Arts

Client: University College for the Creative Arts

Sector: Education

Project: HR solution for multi-site educational facility

The University College for the Creative Arts at Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester is one of the UK's leading providers of specialist art and design education, offering strengths in art, design, architecture, media and communication.

Leading college provider

At five unique locations across the South East of England, it supports a vibrant community of 6,500 likeminded individuals studying over 80 specialist creative courses from foundation to doctorate level. With a reputation for generating real-world success for its graduates, the University College was established on 1 August 2005 combining the united strengths of the Kent Institute of Art & Design (KIAD) and The Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College – the individual histories of which trace back to the art schools of the 19th century.

The HR team

The Human Resources department is made up of a team of 18, who are based at the University College's Farnham and Canterbury sites. The Surrey Institute of Art and Design, University College has been a customer for over 6 years, purchasing ASR for Windows in 1998 before upgrading to HR Professional including modules in Human Resources, Recruitment, Training and e-HR.

The HR Software has been in use at the University College for the Creative Arts at Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester since August 2002. When choosing HR Pro, we wanted to have a system that has windows functionality, data stability, is customisable, easy to maintain and user friendly.

**- Angela Fisher,
Head of Personnel**

On establishment of the new University College, a decision was taken to retain HR Professional as the best tool to implement the changes and challenges of the new organisation.

Employing over 760 staff, the University College's Human Resources team are kept extremely busy in demanding and rewarding roles. Linda Huckle joined the team over 2 years ago as the IT Trainer and Training Co-ordinator at Farnham, and has now become the University College's HR Professional product champion.

Prior to her role with the University College Linda taught IT in Adult Education Colleges and although she had no previous knowledge of HR software databases her experience in IT meant that she was well placed in understanding just how beneficial HR Professional could be to the University College.

Working within the University College's Human Resources Department to fulfil the need for in-house IT Training and Training Co-ordination Linda familiarised herself with HR Professional immediately. Linda completed one of Advanced Business Solutions' comprehensive training plans and soon realised just how powerful a solution HR Professional is.

"As an IT Trainer I viewed the training with 'both hats' on. I liked the layout of the training suites with the plasma screen facing delegates so you can follow what the trainer is doing as well as having your own work station in order to also perform the task yourself."

The training Linda completed gave her the impetus and confidence to maximise the potential of HR Professional, evolving the software with the University College's ever changing needs and requirements. In what was only initially seen as a small part of the role, configuring the software has now become integral in helping to ensure that the University College remains one of the leading independent colleges in the country.

"The Customer Services team members have been to see me on site visits, helping me to set up the more complex areas of the system. Importantly, they have assisted & guided me through setting reports and configurations up, giving me the confidence and knowledge to perform these tasks on my own in the future."

HR Professional has met these requirements and, since having the system installed, we have achieved significant administration efficiencies.

- Angela Fisher,
Head of Personnel

Managing the recruitment process

The Human Resources department includes a recruitment team who record all applicants' data into HR Professional's Recruitment module. The team then match the applicant's data to a vacancy and the vacancy's costings which are also held in HR Professional. The record is then transferred into the Human Resources module when the applicant begins employment. This function of HR Professional is being utilised increasingly by University College as they have recognised its time saving advantages, ease of use and the significant benefit of holding this linked historical data within HR Professional's Human Resources Records.

The main benefit of HR Professional for Linda has been the flexibility of the product;

"I am able to just look at HR Pro and say 'I want it to do that'. I can go into the system, configure it to exactly how I want it to work and know that if I want to change it again in the future I can just do it totally by myself - but also have the back up of the Helpdesk Team & Customer Services if I need them."

Flexible HR software is key

HR Professional's flexible report writer has proved a significant benefit for the University College. Linda and the team have configured a number of reports including:

- current academic staff
- current staff salary and allowances
- HESA reporting - all support staff employed at a particular date
- ethnic origin reporting by dept
- management reporting
- term time only staff
- vacancies between selected dates

Managing the HESA process

The key requirements for higher education establishments are that they all have to provide government with Higher Education Statistical Analysis (HESA) data.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency was set up in 1993 following a Government White Paper 'Higher Education: A New Framework', which called for more coherence in higher education statistics in Britain.

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HESA is now the central source for higher education statistics, having standardised and streamlined the data collection and publication process to become a respected point of reference.

HESA collects five main data sets: Student; Student First Destinations; Staff; Finance and the Non-credit-bearing Course Records. These data streams are collected electronically, analysed and disseminated in range of annual reports and publications.

HR Professional's Human Resources module holds all of the required statistics for staff and also allows the University College to run customised HESA reports. Accommodating the ever changing requirements of HESA codes character lengths and field content is simple, as HR Professional allows the required fields to be configured by Linda on an ad hoc basis, simplifying this annual task greatly. The University College also uses the HESA functionality in HR Professional during the year for quick reference and to assist with Equal Opportunities reporting.

Reducing paperwork

One of the greatest burdens on any HR department is the amount of paperwork that can be involved. HR Professional, helps to reduce this considerably with the University College utilising the electronic mail merges for confirmation of courses to delegates.

The benefits of HR Professional are not only being realised by the University College's HR department, their departmental managers' awareness levels will also be raised via the roll out of Advanced Business Solutions' e-HR module. The introduction of the e-HR module will mean that the University College's departmental managers are no longer reliant on the HR department to produce their ad hoc reporting requests. Self-service Intranet and Line Manager Intranet is currently in the process of being rolled out by the University College and their dual reporting structure will shortly be set up to cater for CDR & Development Review Managers.

Case Study

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- Angela Fisher,
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Rolling out self-service software

"The Self-service Intranet and Line Manager Intranet is being launched now so that end users can familiarise themselves with the product before the additional reporting functionality and these new working-practice opportunities are introduced."

Another substantial future project is the University College's online recruitment. Linda and her colleague, Becky Abrey intend to implement the functionality of an online application form, which will then automatically populate the applicants' data in HR Professional – an idea presented to them at one of Advanced Business Solutions' User Group meetings;

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Advanced Business Solutions looks forward to many more years working alongside the University College helping them to achieve their goals.

About Business Solutions

Advanced Business Solutions, an Advanced Computer Software plc company, provides leading integrated business applications and services that enable public, private and third sector organisations to retain control, improve visibility and gain efficiencies whilst continually improving corporate performance. It's award-winning software systems comprise core financial management, procurement, human resource and payroll systems, integrated with a range of collaborative, document management and business intelligence solutions. It also provides managed and bureau service options.

Advanced Computer Software plc is the UK's leading supplier of software and IT services to the health, care and commercial sectors. It comprises 3 main divisions and has 7000 customers and 800 staff worldwide.

For more information

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