

CASE STUDY: WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

EASING THE STUDENT REGISTRY TEAM WORKLOAD

“ The second stage entry of data was time consuming and tedious. What took the team of 6 two months to input now takes one person just a few days, releasing the registry team for more time to be spent resolving queries to produce the most accurate data that we’ve ever had.

PAULINE HANNON, REGISTRY TEAM LEADER
WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

Situated on a peninsula, Wirral Metropolitan College (WMC) is the area’s main provider of further education with 15,000 students attending both full-time and part-time courses. The College has three main sites and twenty-five outreach centres. It has recently been awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for both Health & Social Care and Construction curriculum areas and received a Beacon Award for Excellence for the National Examining Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) training programmes.

THE NEED

Like all further education colleges up and down the country, the yearly influx of students in September and January brings with it an administration workload of thousands of enrolment forms that has the potential to swamp even the most organised student registry team.

Denise Readdie, MIS Manager at WMC recalls, “When I arrived at WMC the new Head of Information Services, Alec Dunn and his team were just about to implement real-time enrolment. Before this, enrolment forms were processed manually after enrolment day in the College Information Services office and despite best efforts, the actual number of students enrolled was never known by Christmas. Real-time enrolment was a great breakthrough.”

Arriving from Halton College in June 2005, Denise had experience of implementing an electronic attendance system and was keen to further develop the real-time enrolment system at WMC.

“We needed a way of speeding up the time it took to enter all the enrolment details while improving the accuracy of data. During enrolment we keyed in the basic student and course details with the student present as in the previous year. Data not required immediately was left to be input at a later stage. What we needed was a way to speed up this second stage as we still had thousands of enrolment forms we couldn’t file because they hadn’t yet been input.”



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THE SOLUTION

Denise had already met with attendance management software providers at an open day organised by Simon King at New College Nottingham. It was there that she met Ian Gibson of ToKairo. Denise contacted Ian following her move to WMC, "While I was really looking at electronic registers, Ian also suggested that I take a look at Formic Software to automatically capture information from the enrolment forms. ToKairo were a Formic partner and so organised a joint demonstration of their attendance management software, ToKAM and Formic Fusion."

Denise used Formic Fusion's design module to recreate, as near as possible, the enrolment form that was currently being used, "The student enrolment form is 2 sides of A3 and contains a lot of information. I used tick boxes wherever possible to make the form simple to complete and process. The software is pretty intuitive to use and I was really pleased with the result. The form does not even look like a scannable form which is a plus."

“...what was really important for me was the helpdesk support staff – they were absolutely brilliant and helped me get back on track every time.”

DENISE READDIE, MIS MANAGER,
WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

THE RESULT

2006 saw a subtle but important change in the student enrolment process.

"The enrolment forms were still completed in the Enrolment Hall as in previous years, but this time we used Formic Software to automatically scan and capture the detailed second stage enrolment

data. Rather than the whole team being involved the work was completed by mid November; about a month or so earlier than before and by just one member of the team", said Denise.

"We were quite sceptical initially - the College had dabbled with scanning in the past but with little success. But overall, it's worked much better than I thought at taking the workload away from the registry team, which was the main reason for buying it."

CUSTOMER DETAILS

Denise Readdie, MIS Manager, Wirral Metropolitan College

FUSION USER SINCE

2006

MAIN BENEFITS GAINED

- Fusion Software proved 6 times more efficient than manual data entry
- Reduced print cost by retaining in-house control of form design
- Easy to recreate professional-looking enrolment forms using Fusion's design module
- Easy to amend form design to accommodate data collection requirements
- Formic support staff help customers get back on track quickly
- Ability to use A3 paper size
- Ability to scan labels

Looking ahead, Denise plans further productivity gains, "Our next step is to add barcodes to our course labels so that the course information can be also be scanned. We could improve validation of data by installing a scanner into each Enrolment Hall and I'm quite interested in Formic's Web Forms module so that we could put our enrolment form on-line. We also need to look at ways to automate the transfer of data from Fusion to our student record tracking solution which may be possible with the new API functionality."