



RCSI

About The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

- Enrolment: 3,733
- Objective: To move from a customised Quercus by Ellucian system to a baseline version of the solution

Solutions

- Quercus by Ellucian Apply Online Module

Business benefits

- Increased efficiencies
- Cost savings

IT benefits

- Simplified maintenance



A smooth transition

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland creates efficiencies with Quercus by Ellucian

Seeking simplicity and flexibility

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) is a leader in health sciences education, with campuses in Ireland, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia. As well as having Ireland's largest medical school, RCSI is the first to offer a graduate entry programme into medicine. It also delivered Ireland's first nurse prescribing programme and Ireland's first physician associate programme, and also operates the National Internship in Pharmacy programme in Ireland.

RCSI also operates the School of Physiotherapy, the School of Pharmacy, the School of Postgraduate Studies, and the Institute of Leadership, alongside a large contingent of researchers based in Ireland and Bahrain.

With more than 3,700 students from 50 countries, and a full-time staff of 1,200, RCSI is a unique institution in its field, and the only medical educator with four international campuses. For the past decade, RCSI has had a partnership with Ellucian, running Quercus by Ellucian at its Dublin and Bahrain campuses.

As a complete student information system, Quercus by Ellucian can be applied to both a higher education and professional short-course environment. It collects student information through the entire lifecycle—from the time students apply, register for a course and progress through the curriculum, to the moment they get their examination results and eventually graduate.

After a decade running Ellucian's customised version of the Quercus online applications system, RCSI elected to move to the "baseline" Quercus Apply Online Module to simplify and streamline operations, in line with RCSI's strategic objective to enhance organisational capabilities. "Developing custom code to create an online student application system was lengthy in meeting the needs and wants of each department," says Jane Jehanno, project manager at the college. Additionally, the customised system was not updated with software upgrades in essential areas such as workflow enhancements, "accepting offer" capability, and integration with mobile devices.

Prior to moving to the cloud, different departments within the college were still maintaining their own databases and spreadsheets. Not only did this mean that data was fragmented, but also ran the risk of possible data loss or inaccuracy. Hence, the main goal of the move was to review and maximise the use of the system.

"The application provides a complete end-to-end workflow offering," says Jehanno. "Users across all departments can access the data they need. Through the dashboard, they can also see the status of student applicants in real-time."

Moving to the new system

RCSI dedicated an individual to lead the project, which was executed in a number of stages. The system was planned to go live in October 2015, as this was a time when the least number of courses were open for application.

The project began with a full analysis of the existing application processes and requirements, which included workshops with the college's six main departments. Differences in application process and requirements were evident, but these are not unusual for complex health science institutions. These requirements were then mapped against the Quercus baseline system to determine whether it could accommodate the institution's business requirements.

The next steps were to design a process re-engineering map, then to configure and test the solution within a test environment, and finally, full implementation planning and migration. The changes from the old system were significant, so the college rolled out a comprehensive training programme.

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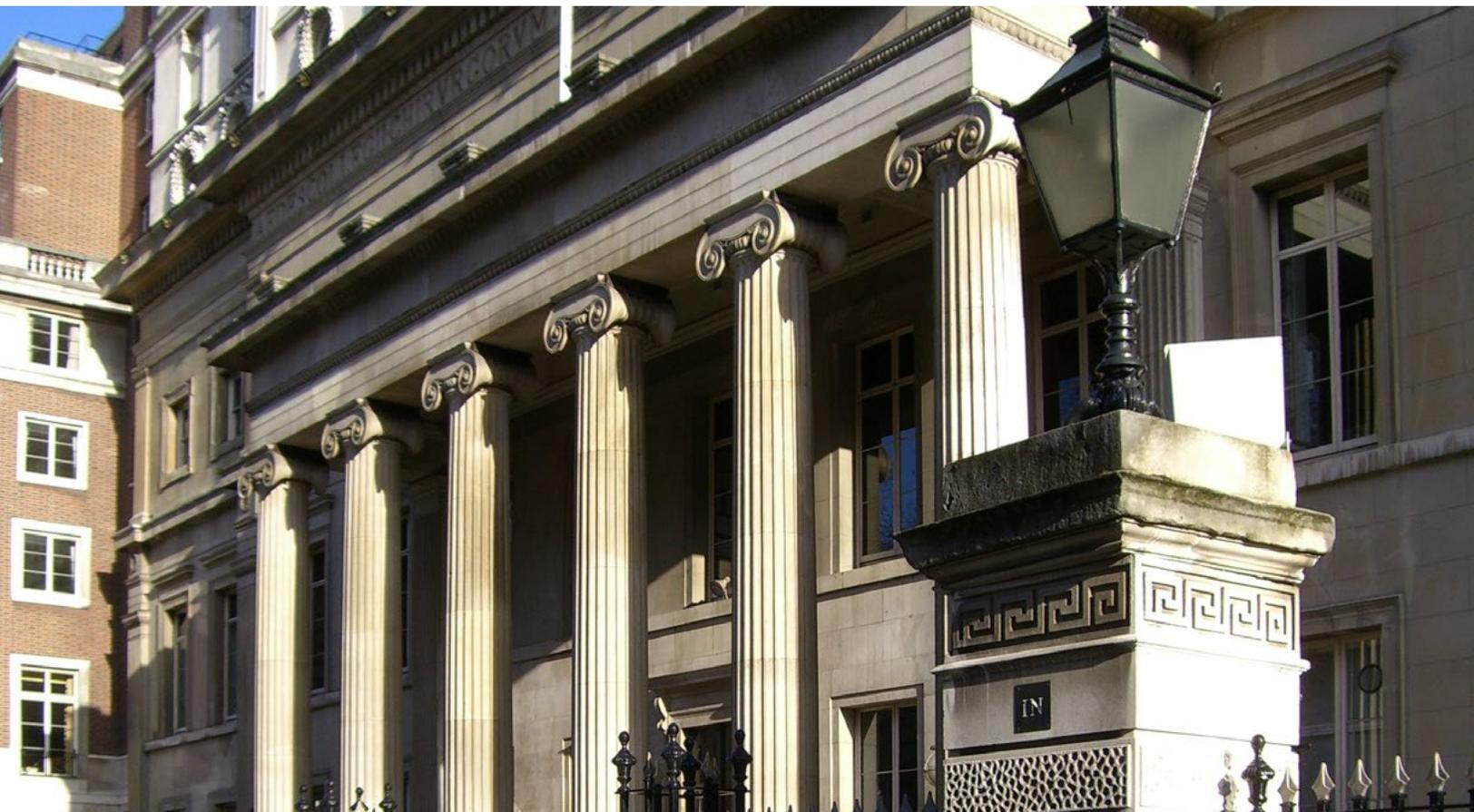
“Initially the different departments were quite reserved about migration, as their core business process was going to significantly change,” says Jehanno. “However, once they got involved in the project, they were very supportive and could quickly see the benefits.”

The cloud-based application is also completely configurable. The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland has branded the look and feel of the application pages to reflect its own logo, fonts, and colour schemes. It has also configured its page messaging and email templates to reflect its branding.

The college’s Dublin campus migrated to a cloud-based system some time ago, and the Bahrain campus migrated in March 2016. Jehanno sees huge benefits in outsourcing its IT infrastructure support, as it enables the college to maintain a smaller technical team. Additionally, the quarterly Quercus updates rolled out by Ellucian are automatically applied, improving the frequency and cost-effectiveness of these updates compared to maintaining the system in-house.

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Definitive results

Through the solution's end-to-end workflow system, the college has significantly improved its ability to implement new personalised online application solutions for departments, which has been a welcome time-saver. To illustrate, the college was recently able to implement the Faculty of Nursing's new online application solution with a bespoke workflow, screens and emails, in just seven days.

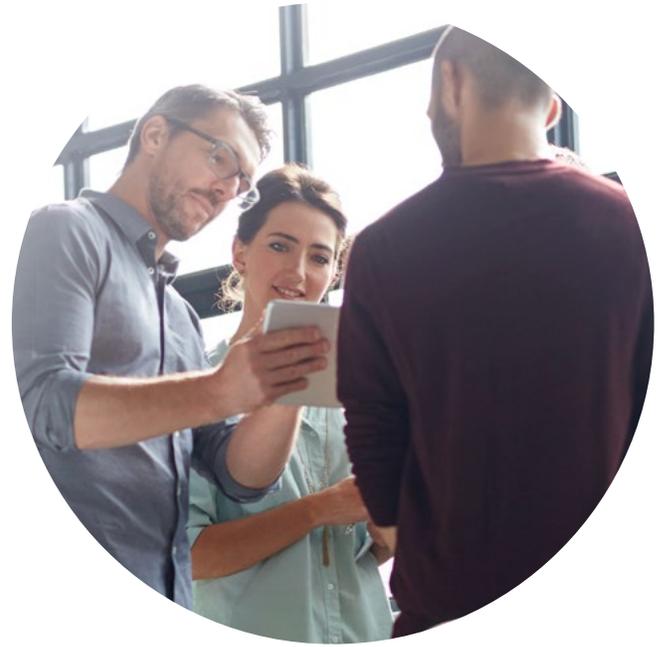
Eradicating paper communications has greatly increased the speed of student communications. This has been particularly valuable with the large percentage of students that apply from overseas.

"From an application viewpoint, the system is responsive to mobile devices," says Jehanno. "By logging into their user account, students can receive notifications through a portal, plus they can submit extra or previously missing information or documentation to support their application.

"Previously on the college's online application website, applicants were presented with all courses and had to narrow down their selection from there. Applicants regularly applied for the wrong course. Now we have a unique link for each course listed on the specific webpage for each individual course."

The baseline system will automatically receive enhancements. It will also have the ability to collaborate with a client community that uses the same version of the software, which can increase the institution's ability to use the system effectively.

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