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Institute of Contemporary Music Performance is transforming management of student information through Quercus by Ellucian

ABOUT

The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance (ICMP) is London's premier school of modern music. It offers courses up to and including Master's degree level—each designed to give students the best chance of success in the competitive and challenging music industry environment.

OBJECTIVES

- Centralise student information
- Streamline processes, such as registration
- Improve the student experience

SOLUTION

Quercus by Ellucian

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Transparent, accurate, efficient business processes
- Ability to comply with regulatory requirements
- More satisfying student experience

In its 25+ years of education, the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance has faced fundamental challenges with student information management. They are now using the Quercus by Ellucian student information system (SIS) to deliver a more efficient and effective experience for its range of constituents.

Pete Whittard, ICMP's new business director, noted: "Through our previous CRM and spreadsheet-based system, we had no central source for student information, and processes such as registration were manual, fragmented and time-consuming."

"We had data sitting in different systems that couldn't communicate," he continued. "When students enrolled, we would pass different pieces of paper from one side of the office to the other in an inefficient and error-prone manner."

Choosing the right technology

ICMP researched information management systems and developed a shortlist of vendors based on implementation costs, operational efficiency, user experience and what Whittard describes as a 'suitable fit' in terms of company ethos.

"In the end, Quercus by Ellucian was the clear choice," said Whittard. "One thing that really stood out for us was that Ellucian was the only vendor that mentioned the student experience. We also found Quercus to be the most straightforward, efficient and effective system overall. As a cloud-based solution, Quercus removed the need to develop on-site IT infrastructure, which significantly reduces our total cost of ownership."

Quercus is now the central repository for all student and course information—enabling ICMP to manage the entire student journey and push relevant information out to statutory bodies.

Quercus captures data at every stage of the student lifecycle, which enables ICMP to manage and deepen relationships, as well as improve academic success. It supports students pursuing full degrees, taking professional development courses, or interacting with ICMP at any level.

Its easy configurability and contemporary design make it both user friendly and cost-effective.

Finally, ICMP committed to finding a centralised student information system (SIS)—one defined by transparency, accuracy and efficient business processes. The system would also have to address a big challenge facing the institution: keeping up with the changing regulatory environment.

The Institute needed to demonstrate compliance with UK statutory bodies, such as UCAS (which administers the application process for the majority of UK universities), SLC (which provides student loans) and HESA (which collects, analyses and disseminates quantitative information on higher education in the UK).

Partnering with Ellucian on a smooth implementation

ICMP had no experience with a comprehensive SIS and braced itself for a steep learning curve. Whittard noted that Ellucian support ensured a smooth transition. "They were flexible enough to deal with faculty and staff who were by no means experts and were extremely supportive," he said.

Internal buy-in didn't happen overnight. ICMP had to increase engagement with departments across campus, as well as invest in ongoing training and project management to maintain momentum. The Institute held daily cross-functional meetings, with the Ellucian Lead Consultant attending two of these sessions to provide support.

System implementation followed an iterative, cloud-accelerated methodology designed for rapid deployment and quick time to value. The entire Quercus suite went live within just eight months—on time and on budget.

Improving the student experience

One of the major benefits to date is having more data on the student experience.

“We’re now gaining real AQIs (academic quality indicators) in areas such as retention, achievement, success and progression,” said Whittard. “We can monitor a range of AQI programmes through Quercus, drill down into why a specific course or population isn’t performing up to par and take steps to improve the student experience based on solid data.” Students can now access their marks online, improving their insight as well.

“At the end of the day, the new efficiencies, cost-effectiveness and data insights all add up to what’s most important—student success,” said Whittard.

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Pete Whittard,
New Business Director, ICMF



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