



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

Strategic Objectives 2011-2015

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Introduction to Management Information Services Division (MISD)

MISD is a Division of the Unified Administrative Service (UAS), and as a customer-led organisation we provide business information services that underpin the critical business processes used across the Collegiate University in research, teaching, learning and administration. We report to the Registry of the University, and on his behalf work with all Institutions in Cambridge to develop and deliver business solutions to improve and enrich the work of the Collegiate University.

Our Purpose (Mission)

Our mission is to work strategically in planning and delivering the Information Service requirements of the University, progressively improving business processes and capabilities, and enhancing the user experiences when using University Information Services.

We work throughout the University to deliver management information solutions that meet business needs in partnership with Schools, Faculties, Departments, Colleges and other Institutions to provide;

- **Student Services** - covering the student life cycle from on-line application processes (graduate, undergraduate and continuing education), the teaching and learning experience, through to graduation, continuing education and on-going Alumni relations
- **Research Services** - enabling the business processes associated with pre award grant applications and post award Financial Management, and Research Excellence Framework reporting
- **Staff Services** - providing services including on-line Recruitment, Staff Self-Service and Records Management, Payroll and Pension services, and staff benefits packages
- **Information Management Services** - providing a range of business applications and services covering students, staff and financial management and administration, specialist office application services with integrated desktop productivity tools, Web and Document management, specialist payment services, on-line services and applications, and management reporting
- **Financial Services** - providing a range of business applications that support running the financial operations of the University, including research grants, card payment systems, purchasing, and systems that ensure financial compliance with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and other funding bodies



Vision

Our vision is to transform the services delivered from UAS and other Institutions to the Collegiate University, through the creation of the Integrated Service Centre (ISC) into which UAS services will evolve, and the development of services by other Institutions, to provide an extensible service portfolio that enhances the services provided by University Institutions, and reduces the overhead of delivering those services, in a professional, secure and flexible way.

With the increase in the use and complexity of systems, and the capabilities available to the general public (e.g. online banking, shopping, www.direct.gov.uk) the expectation of users for an exceptional user experience when using our systems is now a measure of a modern and responsive University. Potential applicants, parents, funding bodies, students, alumni and staff will judge the University on our services. Therefore usability of systems and the ability to interact, share information and communicate with our systems through multiple interfaces is now a critical part in the selection and development of our services.

Values

We aspire to values of the UAS which are defined as;

- We deliver an effective and high-quality service
- We collaborate and work in partnership
- We are open, responsive and innovative
- We respect others and value diversity
- We support, recognise and develop our staff

Business Drivers

MISD is an enabler for University business and so to maintain our services we need to address today's needs whilst planning, developing and delivering the future business. When identifying needs we must consider the external and internal factors that are influencing the direction of the University. An internal workshop for Senior UAS managers in March 2010 defined these as:

a) External Influences – An increasingly Global Market Place

- Leading Universities are increasingly operating on a global stage for research students and academic staff
- Overseas students have a wide choice of destination – and the UK has some particular barriers to entry (e.g. immigration controls)
- At a time when the UK is reducing funding, other countries are investing
- Technology developments are changing the nature of the institution
- The nature of the implied student contract is changing

b) External Influences – UK specific issues

- Profound impact of the economic downturn on Government finances
- Increasing and rapid changing regulation and compliance requirements
- Greater scrutiny of performance – with consequences for reputation and funding
- External pressure to align with Government agenda – e.g. widening participation initiatives
- General pressure on public bodies to be more transparent and provide information e.g. FOI

c) Examples of Internal Changes within the University

- Increasingly global focus – research partnerships, annual sponsorship of 3,000 overseas students
- New collaborations e.g. Cambridge University Health Partners, Cambridge-India Partnerships
- Development of west and north-west Cambridge sites

d) Implications of these factors for UAS

- Changing client needs – internal and external
- Greater expectations of service within and beyond University
- Increase demand for quality management information
- Increased pressure to respond flexibly and fast to new demands
- More demand for effective governance and decision making
- Requirement to demonstrate value for money
- More programmes requiring an integrated solution – from Institutions and the UAS

Objective 1 - Administrative Effectiveness and Efficiency

A major strategic objective for UAS and MISD is the creation of the UAS Integrated Services Centre (the ISC) to deliver hosted and shared services to Institutions across the University where they require robust, flexible and secure business services for administration activities. We are developing and implement the strategy by incremental steps that cover organisational changes (alignment of similar activities), locating UAS administration teams at Greenwich House (GH) and Mill Lane (ML), and strategically developing our systems capabilities.

- The ISC will evolve from existing groups in UAS, redistributing work between departments and central offices (moving work to where the value is added). Following successful pilot projects in 2009/10, deployments of services into GH and ML is starting in 2010/11 with Finance, Training administration, Service Desk rationalisation and Student services
- We are working with the Academic Division to improve the services and efficiencies of the student administration services they provide. Using structured business improvement methodologies a comprehensive review of all processes, including interactions across Colleges and Department, is being undertaken. This will lead to the development of a walk-in Student Services Centre in Cambridge to provide a range of support services to students in a single location, with administrative support from the ISC
- Securing the long term viability of the Cambridge University Finance System (CUFS) as the current system (Oracle version 11.5.10) becomes end of life in 2013 is a priority. A strategic review of our Finance and HR systems to plan the future direction of these two key services is now underway. Evaluating current and future capability requirements will provide a basis for comparing the options of upgrading or replacing the Finance and HR applications. A University Steering Group will oversee this review, followed by a formal project for implementation during 2012-14
- Introducing Electronic Document Management (EDM) capabilities to enable business process improvement through the use of on-line resources and access to information and documents, and the ability to provide Workflow capabilities to improve administrative processes. This capability will be made available across the University for Institutions that will benefit from the use of EDM
- Introducing a new capability to manage web content for users to create, analyse, and optimise site content, run campaigns and targeted user experiences is a pressing need. Moving this away from the domain of the IT technical specialist, we will introduce for users a productive, easy-to-learn, fun-to-use authoring environment with support for in-place editing, drag-and-drop page composition for rapidly development, deploying new templates, designs, and web components to business users

Objective 2 - Services for Research Activities

Develop a portfolio of linked services and systems to assist researchers and research support staff when they are required to apply for research funding and ensure they have the tools to assist with the costing and management of the funding throughout the lifetime of the grant.

- Client Relationship Management
 - Contract Management
 - FEC Pricing & Costing
 - Workflow
 - Recording staff time management (i.e. timesheets)
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- Establish a process and a system that will help the University to manage the corporate relationships with our sponsors and funders and will easily allow the sharing of suitable information with the relevant interested parties under suitable guidelines from the relevant University committees
 - Introduce a capability for use when research is underway and after completion, to assist researchers and research support staff with the tracking of publications, impact, and other outputs such as engagement with the public. There is also the need to comply easily with any requests made for data under the Freedom of Information requests (FOI) and the Research Excellence Framework (REF)
 - A strategic initiative for the preparation of Research Grant applications (costing and pricing) is underway in partnership with the University of Oxford and a commercial partner. This is the first phase in a range of improvements supporting the research community in the administration of Research Grants. The choice of a commercial partner provides opportunity for further integration with their financial and customer records management applications based upon the same platform
 - Provide comprehensive post award financial management capabilities for the researcher and the department and the Heads of Departments housing the research to assist with tactical and strategic planning

Objective 3 - Student Experience

Recognising the distributed nature of our audience, our strategic themes must encompass and extend to the needs of schools, parents, prospective employers, local authorities as well as current students and alumni. Our development process now employs a user centred design process to enhance the user on-line experience at Cambridge, with modern and familiar user interfaces which minimise the need for training and user manuals, and support user equality and a range of user devices (e.g. mobile, tablet and desktop). New on-line services will include capabilities such as providing access to teaching and lecture notes, student applications, fees and financial aid processing, transcripts, references, degree certificates, timetables etc.

Specific programmes of work include:

- Alignment of the CamSIS and CamTools services, and future joint developments with CARET¹ to provide cohesive and integrated platforms, that provide improved services for students, academics and administrative staff involved in teaching, learning, and student records. We expect there to be a future review of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) in Cambridge, where a strategy is developed for collaboration technologies in teaching and research. A pilot of Sakai 3.0 is proposed for 2011/12 also reviewing Google Apps for Education (free without adverts). Looking further ahead to 2014 and beyond there will be on-going research into other group collaboration tools
- The introduction of student on-line registration capabilities will provide benefits to students, parents, colleges and departments through early indication of choices, information for funding and early contact with students for forward planning. The next phase of moving all student applications for undergraduates, graduates, home and overseas students to on-line applications, references and document submissions will complete in 2011/12, followed by work to extend services to the wider audience described above
- In the current competitive climate reaching the very best students internationally and at home is an imperative. Top universities are now using commercially provided services where potential students complete a single application process which can be submitted electronically to several universities. These services significantly improve the experience of applying on-line, therefore to maintain our competitive position we will review the use of these capabilities from vendors such as GTI (Hobsons) and Embark, to establish which services we require in each Global market

¹ Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technologies

Objective 4 - Staff Services

The University needs to attract and retain the very best staff to be successful. We are improving the services and effectiveness of our administration for staff working in or considering a career with the University. We will see a significant shift to on-line access of information through the introduction of modern and familiar interfaces, and effective business processes enabled by the smart use of technology, for example the introduction of electronic document management and web content management systems. The ability for staff to access development and appraisal information, to book training easily and improved on-line material for careers, skills, benefits, job opportunities will become a feature of working in the University.

- A significant number of the business processes associated with staff administration are manual and paper based (word documents/spreadsheets). Following the introduction of the new HR system (CHRIS) we are systematically replacing these processes with on-line and workflow processes. The introduction of employee self-service capabilities, for example, on-line payslips, course booking, leave and absence recording, are the first phase of this work
- Revisions to the Staff Review and Development (SRD) scheme are being considered by the University Council and General Board with the intention to provide on-line appraisal and career management schemes for all staff, including researchers and academics. We will be implementing through a series of related initiatives capabilities to support these revisions to the SRD scheme
- Staff payments are still partially a manual process, however with the introduction of CHRIS, our strategy is to move all staff payments on to a single system, with the ability to enter and process overtime, expense and modified pay on-line and process automated payments (BACS). Staff Self Service access to these services will allow employees to submit and track claims, to view payslips and tax information online, and to obtain bank/building society letters. These services will be available for use by other Institutions in the Collegiate University
- The introduction of a new business system to improve the scheduling, time and attendance of staff working in the University Library will improve the effectiveness of this complex administrative task, and create a new service that can be used within other Institutions where staff scheduling is a major administrative overhead

Working with departments and other Institutions we are introducing a modern web-based recruitment and references system aimed at attracting new staff and improving the recruitment experience for applicants and recruiters in the University. The capabilities will enable the University to market the benefits and advantages we provide as an employer through the recruitment system

Objective 5 - Business Services & Solutions

“Our mission is to work strategically in planning and delivering the Information Service requirements of the University, progressively improving business processes and capabilities, and enhancing the user experiences when using University Information Services.”

MISD provides a complete set of Office and Business Services delivered using our modern, secure and fully managed computing infrastructure integrating applications, networks and computers. By combining these into a total solution we provide robust and flexible services in a reliable environment with a choice of technology and solutions familiar to users and meeting their specific needs. Our services provide an agile development capability through to disaster recovery and business continuity, and enable University Institutions to focus on their core activities and reduce their overheads by not running their own services

We have created a portfolio of skills and experience covering strategic planning, business analysis and change management, project management, solutions development and delivery, and service support, gained through many years of managing complex projects, investment in staff development, and recruiting staff with specialist skills. To deliver on this objective we are engaging across the Collegiate University with Institutions that require improvements in efficiency and effectiveness and wish to increase the services that they provide. By providing our specialist skills we are assisting groups in managing their business change initiatives without the overhead of recruiting external staff.

Some of the initiatives planned and underway include:

- A phased programme working with individual business areas/Institutions for the introduction of the EDM capabilities. The first phase is a pilot in four different business areas identified for improvements: on-line graduate applications and electronic references, Council Committee papers, Pension Department files, Estates Management building plans. Future initiatives and departments planned include: undergraduate admissions, Legal Services, Human Resources, Finance, student paper records
- Analysis of the information processing in the Vice Chancellor’s office to improve the services provided in managing incoming correspondence, originating correspondence from the office, business processes and the use of EDM
- There will be a reporting and management information review to deliver a complete reporting solution in 2012/13, including a strategy to deliver a comprehensive management information service
- We are providing specialist skills to departments to assist with their projects and initiatives; project management, quality assurance and testing, business analysis and change management, business solutions/application development, user centric design

Objective 6 – Value our Staff

MISD relies on our staff to provide the services we deliver and therefore are essential to the success of the University. Our sixth objective relates directly to our Values.

- We deliver an effective and high-quality service
 - Our teams underpin this value; we must provide them with the management support, tools, technology and training they require to complete their work. We are always under pressure to do more with less and endeavour to balance the organisational needs with our capabilities to deliver
- We collaborate and work in partnership
 - Engage with users to agree achievable deliverables
 - Encourage and support staff to meet regularly with users
- We are open, responsive and innovative
 - Encourage creativity, new ideas and challenge
 - Monthly meeting with staff on current activities and issues
 - Maintain our services to current technology to keep staff fresh and up-to-date with industry developments and skills
- We respect others and value diversity
 - By engaging staff in new ideas and concepts
 - Giving opportunity to be involved in new things
 - Welcome and encourage feedback from staff
- We support, recognise and develop our staff
 - Annual appraisals and development plans
 - Management lead from the front, have an open door policy and mean it