



SITS Integrations Project



► A project to deliver all integrations for the new Tribal SITS student system

“Stu3’s technical understanding of SITS and data is very, very high. **They provided a large amount of input**, not only in relation to what SMU does to get SITS integrations up and running, but **how SMU should do it**” Sammy Massiah, SMU Chief Information Officer

The Challenge

St Mary's University began their implementation of SITS:Vision with ambitious timelines to go-live with Admissions in August 2019 and with Students in August 2020. However, in order to fully address the historical problem of student data being administered in a very manual way resulting in bottlenecks, integrations between SITS and other core systems also had to be attended to.

St Mary's chose Stu3 as their partner experts in SITS integrations to deliver their objective of making student administration more efficient, cost effective, and seamless.



Sammy Massiah

"We actually had little expertise in electronic student management let alone SITS. There were twenty integrations which we needed to implement for the core student lifecycle by August 2020." **Sammy Massiah, SMU Chief Information Officer**

The University enlisted Stu3 to help "get the right solution as quickly as possible" explains Sammy, and to take on the responsibility of delivering all SITS integrations, including:

- ▶ Moodle
- ▶ CRM - Customer Relationship Management
- ▶ Accommodation (Occam)
- ▶ CelCat Timetabling
- ▶ Attendance Monitoring
- ▶ Personal Tutor Dashboard
- ▶ Strategic Planning - Tableau
- ▶ Target Connect
- ▶ Abyasa - Placement Management
- ▶ Paperless Interviews
- ▶ DDS Dyslexia and Disability Services

It also included spreadsheet uploads from:

- ▶ Library Services - Info Library System (Vsmart)
- ▶ Library Services - Talis Reading List



Sammy goes on to say that in replacing one student record system with another, the tendency of the University was to look for ‘like-for-like’ replacements in the integration solutions. However, where practical, Stu3 advised to move to using **StuTalk** for real time integrations, specifically between:

- ▶ SITS and ACT (ID Card production)
- ▶ SITS and Active Directory (staff and student authentication)

Stu3 was tasked with completing the design, development, and testing of all integration solutions (through development and test environments to production) within **four months** to include:

- ▶ Confirmation of the technical requirements.
- ▶ Mapping of SITS data fields to the target data required in the target system.
- ▶ Design of SITS components to move data between SITS and the target system.
- ▶ Build of SITS components to move data between SITS and the target system.
- ▶ Provision of test scripts to support the SITS element of system, user, and end to end testing.
- ▶ Release of the SITS components to the production environment.
- ▶ Transfer of knowledge of the SITS components at go-live.

Further, the project needed to be completed in the time of lock-down and COVID-19, which meant that all work had to be delivered remotely.

The Solution

The full set of integrations solutions were delivered by Stu3 within the timescales, including two StuTalk integrations:

- ▶ SITS and ACT - the core university identity card management system for student ID card production.
- ▶ SITS and Active Directory - the university’s person authentication system for both staff and students.

The following integrations were delivered using database views and scheduled tasks on St Mary’s Microsoft SQL infrastructure.

▶ **Moodle – the University’s virtual learning environment.**

The Moodle integration sends hierarchical data from SITS (courses and modules and which faculty they belong to) and also enrolments of students on those courses/modules.

▶ **CRM – Customer Relationship Management system**

to engage with current students and alumni. This integration passes both applicant and student information from SITS to the CRM.

▶ **Occam – the accommodation system** - to provide first year students the option of Hall of Residence. This integration uses Tribal’s Occam/SITS Interface Process to populate staging tables for applicants and students.

▶ **CelCat - timetabling system** – passes student, course and module enrolment information from SITS to CelCat.

▶ **Attendance Monitoring** – sends details of relevant students from SITS to the Attendance Monitoring system for UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration) reporting and general university attendance reporting requirements.

▶ **Personal Tutor Dashboard** – a bespoke system to supply tutors information about their tutees. It leverages views of student enrolment and personal data created for the CRM.

▶ **Strategic Planning - Tableau** – used by the Planning department - requires student data sets for statistical analysis / reporting purposes.

▶ **Target Connect - Careers services** – sends student enrolment information from SITS.

▶ **Abyasa - Placement management system** used by the Education institute to manage PGCE students on work placements in schools.

▶ **DDS Dyslexia and Disability Services** – a bespoke system used by the DDS team - views of data are provided of the student, their enrolments and data captured in the accessibility management component of SITS.

▶ **Talis Library Services - Vsmart** – requires lists of current students to enable access and lending facilities within the library.

The Benefits

By partnering with Stu3 to deliver their integrations, the University benefited in the following ways:

- ▶ **Timelines:** The integrations were designed, developed, tested and delivered to very tight timelines - only four months from start to delivery - enabling St Mary's to go-live with the student replacement project, as scheduled, for the beginning of enrolment.
- ▶ **Expertise:** The Stu3 consultants' intimate knowledge of the SITS schema allowed them to quickly capture the detailed data mapping requirements, create the views, and deliver technical documentation to enable support of the integrations by the internal IT team.
- ▶ **Technical Support:** Stu3 provided handover sessions, training, and technical documentation to ensure the internal support team could support and maintain the integrations moving forward.
- ▶ **Go-Live:** Stu3 provided go-live support and were fast to respond to queries from the internal team.
- ▶ **Standard Solutions:** Stu3 implemented solutions using standard SITS functionality and Windows scheduled tasks, to ensure support and future changes were easy to handle.

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Sammy Massiah, SMU Chief Information Officer

Working on the project

Each integration had its own small team working on it and involved a close partnership between Stu3 and SMU. This included a Stu3 developer to handle the SITS to external system interface, a SMU developer responsible for external system changes, and where required, a SMU business user to provide input and advice regarding business processes and requirements. Each team met regularly to catch up on the status of the integrations, and to get input and clarifications.

It was the middle of the pandemic and most people were still getting used to a new, entirely virtual way of working, yet everyone involved in the integration work was motivated to complete the task, and similarly buoyed up.

“I think it helped that Stu3 are very flexible and willing to get into the customer’s space with regards to what we are trying to achieve, and being flexible in how they can help achieve our aims. I would be very happy to work with Stu3 and very happy to recommend them to other institutions. Companies like Stu3 should go far and should be successful. They have the right ethos for a HEI supplier: knowledge, experience, helpful and supportive - which is a winning combination.”

Sammy Massiah, SMU Chief Information Officer

Background on Client



Established in 1850 and with a deep heritage in education, St Mary's has a strong reputation for teaching excellence and a student-centred approach.

With an original intake of just six students, St Mary's has now grown to around 6,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students across the four academic Schools. On 23rd January 2014, St Mary's University College, Twickenham, was awarded full university title by the Privy Council and became St Mary's University, Twickenham.

Stu3 Case Study

Let's chat.

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