Curriculum Management Project

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PACKAGED SOLUTION		CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT		STU3 COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

▶ An online solution for curriculum management

" A major challenge for the project was the breadth of the **four areas of change** that needed to be made to the curriculum and inputting a **baseline curriculum** into the system as a starting point in order to be able to maintain and make those changes. I believe other universities have solutions that cover only part of what we were trying to achieve. We had a **very complex request** and a very broad spectrum to cover using the same solution. " **Sian Norris, UoW Project Manager**

Stu3 Case Study

STUDENT
SYSTEM
SOLUTIONS

The Challenge

In 2018, the University of Westminster undertook a Curriculum Management Project which involved a major overhaul of the way changes to the curriculum were managed in SITS and eVision.

The project came with significant discovery work to understand and document the landscape in which the SITS data existed. Key drivers for this work included:

▶ **A lack of version control** of module descriptors
▶ **No centralised management system** with data and documents held on local drives and School specific sites.
▶ **Manual processes for the management** of curriculum data sets
▶ **Reduced staff capacity across all areas** due to an organisational restructure of Professional Services

These underlying factors led to a lack of oversight and control of the curriculum that was published to students, challenges when staff left and resource intensive management of processes around programme and module creation and content management.

Sharon Remedios

Sharon Remedios, Quality and Assurance Manager at UoW, and a key member of the project team adds, *"The communication of the curriculum management processes was being managed through emails and documents largely on local SharePoint sites. The Quality and Standards team were spending a significant amount of time and effort replicating information from Word documents into SITS to create modules and courses and to maintain them."*

The University chose Stu3 as their partner experts in SITS to meet the challenge of delivering a solution that would be the single source of truth for published Programme Specifications and Module Proformas details, and which would provide a transparent, seamless and operational solution for creating, updating, reviewing and approving curriculums, specifically around:

▶ **Validations**
▶ **Revalidations**
▶ **Modifications (Minor, Major and Structural)**

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The most immediate challenge to the University was the need to populate SITS eVision with data from existing Programme Specifications and Module Proformas: data previously held in Word documents and PDFs. This was a prerequisite to the solution becoming operational, and the University set about employing two Data Entry Staff for **5 months** to assist the Quality Assurance Team in completing the task.

"One of the first challenges was collating all the module descriptors (approximately 2000), noting part of the problem we were trying to resolve was centralisation of the documents. This needed to happen prior to the appointment of data entry staff. The recruitment of appropriate data entry staff was also critical to the Project. We experienced some challenges in ensuring experienced data entry staff could be recruited at an appropriate grade, noting the data entry would ultimately become the published version of the module to all students and would have key links to data in SITS."

Sharon Remedios Quality Assurance Manager, UoW

It also became clear, early in the project, that a dedicated UoW project resource was imperative to delivering a solution that met the needs of the institution, and Sharon Remedios, Quality Assurance Manager, was seconded to the project during 2019-20.

"Having Sharon made a huge difference to the project. We now had somebody on board who understood the business need and the business processes, all the sticking points, and really importantly, how to get buy-in from the stakeholders."

Mel Johnson, Business Analyst, Stu3

"The Curriculum Management Project was a very exciting opportunity for Quality and Standards and for me personally. The data entry of all course set up is undertaken by the Quality and Standards Team, this involves 13 screens in SITS and approximately 100 fields per course set up; likewise the ongoing changes to Module data in SITS is the responsibility of the team following approval through QA processes. This had led to significant resourcing issues and a drifting in our

priorities as a Quality and Standards Team. The opportunity to solve this as well as improve the accuracy of information published was very exciting". **Sharon Remedios, Quality Assurance Manager, UoW**

The Solution

Sian Norris

"When we carried out the initial demo sessions, people were quite keen on having everything in one place, and having visibility of where a request or document was at in the process. It was a positive response. What really appealed to the leadership was being able to see what's happening and where things were up to at any point in time in one place, rather than having hundreds of emails that can't give you that sort of overview." **Sian Norris, Project Manager**

"It was important that the solution was user friendly and that academics could easily get the help they needed as they were using the solution…. Including staff training (videos, sessions, manuals, online help)"

Sharon Remedios Quality Assurance Manager, UoW

Stu3 worked closely with the UoW Project Team to refine the requirements and scope of the delivered curriculum management (CM) solution, which included:

▸ **Data Entry eVision Tool** to enable Data Entrists to copy Programme Specification and Module Proforma data from PDF/Word documents into SITS fields. Prerequisite to rolling out the full CM solution.

▸ **Dashboard** to see progress across multiple proposals with the ability to:
  ▷ Filter by College or School, proposal status and proposal creation date.
  ▷ Search for existing proposals

▸ **Task to create CM Proposals** to enable users to propose a curriculum update and introduce new draft versions of Programme Specifications and/or Module Proformas to the system for approval. The proposal task

provides the ability to view, create or update:
- lists of participants (Module Leaders, Course Leaders, Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality, Heads of School, Quality Lead etc)
- links to associated programme specifications or Module Proformas.
- links to supporting documentation
- notes/actions with optional emails to selected participants
- a checklist of additional requirements
- any other details relevant to the type of proposal.

▶ **Configurable default participant list** via eVision tool to determine which participant types are automatically defaulted into the proposal (e.g. proposal initiator, course leader, panel members etc.), depending on the type of proposal

▶ **Configurable proposal permissions setup** via eVision tool to define which participants have access to which actions depending on the status of the proposal

▶ **Configurable approval workflow** tailored differently for each type of proposal:
- Validation
- Revalidation
- Minor Modification
- Major Modification
- Structural Modification

▶ **Task to create new Programme Specification versions** based on the previous version (or a template version when brand new) with content specific to the Final Award type and other framework attributes (e.g. multi-route, study abroad option etc.). Each Programme Specification version contains:
- Programme Specification version key attributes (name, version number and status e.g. Draft, Locked, Published etc.)
- Notes, comments and actions
- All Programme Specification version content stored in individual records per field in each version, allowing last-updated details to be held at this individual field level
- Course structure details

▷ Previous specification versions, including differences between versions (field-level)

▸ **Task to create new Module Proforma versions** depending on the module type and associated attributes, as well as the ability to add and/or view:

▷ Proforma name, version number and status (e.g. Draft, Locked, Published etc.)

▷ Notes, comments and actions

▷ Module Proforma version content stored in individual records per field in each version, allowing last-updated details to be held at this individual field level

▷ Previous specification versions, including differences between versions (field-level)

▸ **Configurable, field-level help text** for Programme Specifications and Module Proforma completion via eVision tool.

▸ **Task to automatically create SITS Course, Programme and Route and all other associated tables** with approved/published new Programme Specification data.

▸ **Task to automatically create and update SITS Module tables** with approved/published Module Proforma data.

▸ **eVision Reports with filterable criteria:**

▷ **Annual Revalidation Report** listing the Panel Chair and Panel Chair Members for each proposal

▷ **Modifications Reports** listing all modification proposals created between the entered date range

▷ **Validations/Revalidations Report** listing all validation / revalidation proposals created between the entered date range

▷ **Learning Outcomes Report** listing all learning outcomes that have been attached to all Programme Specification within the selected School / Level

▷ **All Modules Report** listing every Module (MOD) in the system and whether it has an associated Module Proforma and/or Programme Specification(s).

▷ **Data-field change reports**, readily showing individual-field-level changes / differences between any two versions of a Programme Specification or Module Proforma (with dates of each field change and who updated each field information available).

▸ **Student and staff task** to search and retrieve the latest published, Programme Specification and Module Proforma versions and open them as either WCAG AA 2.1-compliant html documents or downloadable PDF documents.

The Benefits

"Academic teams started using the solution in June to submit minor modifications, including replacing examinations with authentic assessments. Our Quality Assurance Team has done an amazing job in processing over 550 modifications and three new course validations in the system during July."

Louise Kernahan, Assistant Registrar, Quality & Standards, UoW.

| ≈ 2000 module discriptors entered | > 200 programme specifications entered | > 550 minor modifications processed | 20 validation proposals set up | 5 school based revalidation proposals set up |

The benefits from delivering the curriculum management solution have been significant to the University, and include:

▸ **Established and reliable single source of truth** for published Programme Specification and Module Proformas as they are now held in the same system as the operational data and are fully version controlled at the individual field level.

▸ **User Satisfaction further to:**
  ▷ a well structured and configurable process for managing changes to Programme Specification and Module Proformas
  ▷ a consistent, user-friendly format, which does not expose the

complexity of the underlying data to the end user.

▷ an asynchronous approval process approach allowing for more collaborative Review and Approve practices

▷ the ability for everyone to see what is going on at any time

▷ The ability to readily compare a Programme Specification or Module Proforma version to any previous version of the same document, showing values that have changed between any two versions in a simple manner.

▶ **Reduction in the time and effort** by the Quality and Standards team due to the ability to now

▷ Jump in to any proposal and use supervisory access to adjust status, assignment or content when required

▷ Readily update help text associated with fields in the tasks and documents to improve user-friendliness.

▷ Automatically deploy changes to underlying SITS tables

▷ Proactively monitor progress of proposal approvals and interfere where needed

▶ **Increased transparency to senior management**, now able to monitor how many curriculum changes of different types are taking place each year (e.g. minor, major or structural modifications etc.) and by which departments, in order to understand and therefore better manage busier times of year

"The system will be used for new course validation and existing course revalidation events in the autumn and major and structural modifications next spring. It will speed up creation of course and module records in SITS allowing the QA Team more time to provide guidance to colleagues. In the longer term it will improve reporting on curriculum data and publication of course information."

Louise Kernahan, Assistant Registrar, Quality & Standards, UoW.

Working on the project with Stu3

"I found Stu3 to be very professional and responsive, very clear on who was working on what. The weekly progress reports were really helpful especially at the time when lots of development was going on - keeping everyone up to date with what had happened in that week. Stu3 have a very strong relationship at the University, especially with the SITS operations team. They are very confident about Stu3's work, more than Tribal, and they particularly like the technical documentation that Stu3 provides." **Sian Norris, UoW Project Manager.**

"I was seconded to the Curriculum Management Project for 18 months and during that time worked closely with Stu3. Stu3 know SITS very well which was a huge benefit, this meant in the early stages of the project we were able to focus on complex business processes, our Academic Model and the needs of the system and its variety of users. Once this business analysis was captured I found Stu3 were able to provide solutions to challenges we faced, in particular issues such as providing help text per field, giving Quality and Standards control of templates and process changes that may occur, meaning key aspects could be future-proofed. We are still in the process of rolling out key processes and Stu3 have continued to be responsive to our business needs "

Sharon Remedios, Quality Assurance Manager

Future Enhancement Options

▸ Add option to allow use of another programme's specification as a template when creating a brand new Programme Specification.

▸ Add option to allow use of another module's proforma as a template when creating a brand new Module Proforma.

▸ Update the Module Proforma and Programme Specification solutions to cater for any new data requirements that may arise from HESA Data Futures.

▶ Additional management reports comparing year-on-year activity.
▶ Additional reporting and/or functionality to ensure published
Programme Specification diet data is in agreement with underlying SITS
Programme Diet data.
▶ Direct integration with UoW public website to publish PSs or MPs or
fields therein (Stutalk)

Background on Client

The University of Westminster was founded as Britain's first polytechnic
in 1838. Since then it has developed into a university that combines both
metropolitan and cosmopolitan dimensions, and which is closely involved
in business, professional and academic life within London, as well as
overseas. The University has over 19,000 students from over 169 nations.

Let's chat.

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