

CAPITA

Case Study

Helping St David's College meet changes in statistical and funding requirements



The background

In the early 2000s the major changes to the statistical and funding systems in Wales provided many challenges to colleges and their MIS systems. Mark Breslin of St. David's Catholic College in Cardiff explains how the power and flexibility of UNIT-e helped them rapidly move, firstly, to the new ELWa (Education and Learning Wales) systems and why he felt that the system would be robust enough to cope with any further changes. Since then there have been further changes to the structure in Wales most recently with the funding regime switch to the Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS).

The challenge

When it was introduced the Lifelong Learning Welsh Record (LLWR) was developed to be the unified way in which learning providers must electronically submit data for funding, monitoring and analysis. For Welsh educational and training bodies this was to be a fundamental change in the structure of data sets and a move to an ongoing transfer of data to ELWa. In response to these new demands, and working closely with the Welsh users, Capita FHE developed an LLWR returns module that uses the power of the UNIT-e curriculum structure to provide a powerful and flexible solution.



The solution

The UNIT-e LLWR module comprises a set of Welsh specific, data entry screens that enable the rapid entry of information. These applications provide a consistent look and feel across the UNIT-e suite which is intuitive and easy to use. In addition, the UNIT-e LLWR module provides user-defined data entry screens which can be tailored to meet the specific data entry requirements of the College.

Mark comments, "I continue to be a great fan of the grid editing facility, which is a method of rapidly updating data in a style very similar to spreadsheet data entry. I have found this invaluable for rapid data entry and error correction. I don't believe there is anything as powerful as UNIT-e in the Welsh market".

UNIT-e is equipped with file production routines that will produce all the LLWR data sets for submission to LLWR via their website, including more recent Work Based Learning (WBL) requirements. Users have the flexibility to refine and modify the report production to closely meet particular needs. www.capitafhe.co.uk

Further and Higher Education
5 Mercian Close
Watermoor
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 1LT

t: 01285 647500
f: 01285 647599

marketing@capitafhe.co.uk
www.capitafhe.co.uk

The results

During 2004/05 Capita developed enhancements as part of the standard release program. This provided all Welsh users with the ability to submit the additional information for WBL records.

In 2005/6 further enhancements were made to handle linkage between Learning Activity and Award data sets. Mark comments, "After I attended an early ELWa briefing, I was confident that UNIT-e would cope with the developments with little or no change to the existing system. My confidence was supported in practice and I am pleased to say also that the transition to DCELLS has also, as expected, been trouble free".

Saint David's Catholic College is located to the north east of Cardiff and is the only sixth form college in Wales offering a wide range of courses. These operate from level 1 to level 4. Students can choose to undertake traditional academic programmes of study or they may choose to embark upon more directly work-related programmes of study. Student numbers have increased substantially since its establishment in 1987, from approximately 350 students to just over 1,100 full-time students currently enrolled. These are nearly all 16-19 years of age.

In November 2006 the College had a very good inspection report conducted by Estyn, the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. It was awarded grade 1s in several key areas including: how learners achieve; Guidance and Support; Management and Evaluation; Improvement of Quality and Standards. In addition the College's Results Improvement Strategy was highlighted as an example of Outstanding Practice.