

Boosting efficiency and effectiveness with integrated MIS solution, REMS



Created in 2013 through the merger of three academic institutions, Fife College now has around 20,000 full- and part-time students and offers more than 1,000 education and training courses ranging from introductory to post-graduate level.

Maximising efficiency with a truly integrated MIS system

Following the merger, administrators at Fife College found themselves managing a large number of complex processes, driven by data from thousands of students, staff and other sources. The organisations that merged to create the new body were running two separate MIS systems, as well as several other applications managing tasks such as bursaries. The newly-formed college required an integrated system to handle all elements of the learner lifecycle, from initial enquiry, through enrolment and all the way to completion.

“Our central requirement was a system that could manage all the core processes such as applications, enrolments, timetables and funding. We wanted everything in one integrated package.”

Wendy Brymer, Director, Planning & Performance,
Fife College

Outcomes

- ▶ Eliminates the need for bolt-on solutions, replacing multiple applications
- ▶ Provides a single point of access for staff and students
- ▶ Consolidated student view, available to all teaching staff
- ▶ A reliable, quick-to-upgrade system which allows staff to spend more time with students and less time on administration
- ▶ Boosts efficiency with easy integration and comprehensive reporting
- ▶ A logical, open database which allows quick access to and control of your data
- ▶ Meets compliance and auditing requirements
- ▶ Fully supports the needs of the Scottish FE sector.

400-500

employees use the system annually



20,000

students access REMS via portal



A key requirement for the new system was full integration, with the ability to manage data from multiple sources and users.

For example, application and enrolment information entered by administration staff, timetabling and register data from lecturing staff, grant and funding information by the student funding department and personal data entered by the students themselves. Information from all these sources must be combined within individual student records, ensuring it only has to be entered once to provide a single view of all relevant data.



In addition, Fife required an MIS solution that met the regulatory requirements of the FE sector in Scotland. Student funding regulations in Scotland are complex, especially around means testing of student awards. With responsibility for administering some £7m annually in student funding on behalf of the government, and a requirement to reconcile data on an ongoing basis as well as in an annual audit, Fife College needed a reliable system to manage this important process.

“At my previous college, I had to plan for a week’s outage when upgrading the MIS. With REMS, I plan for a couple of hours.”

Kris Getchell, Chief Information Officer, Fife College

Boosting efficiency and staff effectiveness

After a consultation period, the college selected Civica’s REMS, which fulfilled all of the requirements above as well as providing additional benefits. Senior management agreed that REMS catered well to the Scottish market without the need for expensive customisation. As Kris Getchell said, REMS is a “**plug and play system. It works.**”

Given the size of Fife College, the system’s flexibility and robustness is key. Each of the 350 lecturers and all the administration staff have access to REMS, meaning that 400-500 use the system annually. In addition to this, 26,000 Fife College students also access REMS via a portal. While a single point of access is a key benefit, it also creates a requirement to closely control the level of access, something that REMS handles seamlessly.

REMS has also boosted staff efficiency and effectiveness. Lecturers now have access to more information in one place than ever before, with a consolidated view of student records.

“REMS is more than capable of dealing with the Scottish reporting system. As the government wants more and more information, Civica and REMS are able to support us in meeting audit requirements.”

Wendy Brymer, Director, Planning & Performance, Fife College

REMS provides reporting and auditing capabilities that enable the College to meet compliance requirements. Kris Getchell, Fife College’s Chief Information Officer, likes the structure of the REMS database and the ease of extracting information: “**The database is logical; it’s simple to access the information needed for reports.**”

The ability to build on standard reports and create new reports, whether related to student funding or to the stage of a student’s application, is a significant time-saver. Kris says, “**Has it helped our efficiency? Yes, and there’s probably even more we can do, which will allow us to reallocate staff and resource elsewhere.**”