



Case Study: Document Manager – Gateway Community College, Leicester



Leading Midlands College

Country: UK

Industry: Further Education

Profile: Successful and thriving general further education college located in Leicester, UK.

Key Drivers: To improve speed, efficiency and reliability of enrolment, student records keeping, records access and auditable compliance.

Gateway Community College saves days of effort and stays compliant with digital enrolment and records management

“Document Manager works, so you never have to deal with it that much, which is a sign of good software.”

Richard Thomas, Gateway Community College

Gateway Community College has a ninety year history of providing an important educational facility to learners in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, with its roots in Arts and Technology.

Today, Gateway College supports almost 1,800 learners and provides a range of vocational and academic qualifications from entry level 1 to advanced level 3 for learners aged 16 to 25 years old.

The College enjoys an Ofsted rating for good “teaching, learning and assessment.” Ofsted also reported that “Managers provide strong leadership with ambitious targets for improvement.”

The college offers a distinctive mix of advanced-level subjects and vocational courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level, which is a mix that is particularly successful in meeting local needs.

Records management: Numbers mean potential complexity

The numbers 1,800 (pupils) and 330 (courses) suggest that managing records could be complex and time-consuming.

Given that a single learner requires five or more documents to be recorded and stored at their time of enrolment – from identity, to loan agreement and course registration – a paper-based system would result in the storage and ongoing management of more than 10,000 paper documents each year.

Management means recording any status or course changes. Plus, where and how are records to be maintained when both administrative and educational staff require frequent access?

“Records are scanned via fast, integrated Fujitsu scanners or incorporated from electronic media and saved by student ID.”

**Richard Thomas, Gateway
Community College**

Finally, records have to be kept securely and maintained in an auditable way to satisfy government inspections. A student’s up-to-date status and a comprehensive record of their journey through College is always available.

Filing cabinets are not a genuine option when such data volumes are involved.

Choosing Document Logistix’ Document Manager

The College wanted a document management system that would streamline the way it on-boards learners and makes it possible for stakeholders to amend or simply view records efficiently.

The College was initially looking to increase operational efficiency when handling the large amount of enrolment documentation, and subsequently looked to extend the benefits of digital document management to multiple stakeholders.

The selected solution comprises barcode readers, business-class Fujitsu scanners and Document Logistix flexible software Document Manager.

Benefits of Document Manager

- Increased operational efficiency
- Reduced use of paper
- Less time taken to process documents
- High levels of security
- Reduced manual administration
- Improved access to documents for all users
- Being able to see every system entry or change to any record or document

Document Manager Access

Although student records are held centrally, staff such as tutors need regular access to records. Whereas previously tutors had to visit the faculty administrative offices to gain access, they can now retrieve records from any PC on campus. Document Manager enables users to access information on students in real time, whenever they have a query.

The large numbers on learners and courses means that Gateway staff have to manage a large quantity of varied documents with speed and efficiency. Document Manager delivers quicker, wider and easier access to information and reduces paperwork. Gateway can now provide a better, more efficient service to our customers – the students.

A Manager’s Perspective

Richard Thomas, Gateway College MIS and Exams Manager, was not part of the original tender process but has used Document Manager for more than two years and has become an advocate of its benefits over other solutions.

The words ‘capture’, ‘store’ and ‘retrieve’ are so simple, and when applied to documents and information they would describe simple processes.

However, Richard Thomas’ experience in his role at another educational institution means he’s well placed to comment on the differences between paper and digital information management systems.

He recounts that capturing enrolment documents took many days to collect and file in hundreds of manila folders. Any records change required a revisit to the filing cabinets. Whenever a staff member required information they had to call or visit the records office where the information was physically stored.

At Gateway College, he says, "Records are scanned via fast, integrated Fujitsu scanners or incorporated from electronic media and saved by student ID. Subsequently, records are available securely via an online portal from anywhere in the college to anyone with appropriate permissions."

When asked what the main system differences are, Richard Thomas said, "It's the difference between literally trawling through a small mountain of documents and making a couple of clicks. You can search by learner and document type; the savings in time are vast."

Another significant advantage of a digital document management system is that it allows for self-service. College staff can access information remotely.

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Digital Records: Better for Customers

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In a purely commercial environment, digital records enable organisations to improve aspects of business from procurement and client services to invoicing and cash flow. With Document Manager, Gateway College is also able to provide a better, more efficient service to its customers – the students.

TRENDS

Educational records: Today's Challenges

The main challenges for Records Management in tertiary education and how Document Manager helps to overcome them

Records Managers are in the front line of managing risk for their college or university.

Records Managers have to ensure that documents are in place and course registrations are accurate and up to date to facilitate learners progress while they have to deal with the potential of a disruptive audit.

The main three challenges Records Managers face are

A. Making Records Easily Accessible

Digital document management helps to overcome the issue of accessibility by:

- **Digitising records** so that they are viewable on electronic devices
- **Applying metadata to records** so that they are searchable by record type
- **Using saved searches** to perform routine searches for a specific record types

B. Complying with Retention Schedules

Organisations have a wide range of record retention schedules to comply with. The advantage of electronic records management systems is that retention schedules can be automated, which means mass paper shredding is no longer required.

- **Auto-filing newly created records** according to regulations
- **Automatically retaining, transferring and archiving** records based on the record type
- **Grouping records in series** based on their retention and disposition schedules

C. Preparing for Audits

Throughout the records management cycle, organisations are subject to audits. Organisations have to prove to regulators that they retain records in compliance with their legal requirements.

To simplify audit preparation, Document Manager enables organisations to:

- **Monitor system events** such as login and logout, document creation, amendment and destruction, password changes and more
- **Log user actions** made on any device
- **Generate audit reports** that specify the time, user and changes associated with all system modifications

Document Manger tracks every interaction with documents stored in the repository.