

## SAP Customer Success Story Higher Education and Research



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The University of Newcastle upon Tyne

### AT A GLANCE

#### Summary

The University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Newcastle, United Kingdom) has 14,000 undergraduate and 4,000 postgraduate students. Faced with intense global competition for international and postgraduate students, the university turned to SAP® software, once again, to improve recruitment processes.

#### Web Site

[www.newcastle.ac.uk](http://www.newcastle.ac.uk)

#### Key Challenge

Improve ability to compete for U.K. share of international and postgraduate students in a declining market

#### Project Objective

Reengineer recruitment process to substantially increase the number of students

#### Solutions and Services

- SAP Customer Relationship Management application
- SAP NetWeaver® platform

#### Why SAP Solutions

- Ability to leverage existing SAP software and fast-track the implementation
- Wider breadth of functionality versus companies specializing in education
- Foundation for future process improvements

#### Implementation Highlights

- Rapid 8-month installation
- Clear vision of reengineered recruitment process
- Sign off from all stakeholders
- Committed, sufficient funding
- Strong alignment between project senior management, executive board, and SAP
- Strong engagement between project team and end users
- Innovative documentation, like Web-streamed movies to demo new processes

#### Key Benefits

- 25% increase in firm acceptances (postgraduate) year on year
- Faster decision making (by a factor of 7)
- Streamlined administrative processes – elimination of manual tasks such as copying, logging, collating, and searching for files
- Overwhelmingly positive feedback from student applicants
- Ability to plan university budgets with more certainty, thanks to accurate management reports

#### Implementation Partner

SAP Consulting

#### Existing Environment

Software from the SAP for Higher Education & Research solution portfolio, including the SAP Student Lifecycle Management application

#### Third-Party Integration

- Database: Oracle
- Hardware: Sun
- Operating system: Solaris

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

### SAP® Software Supports University in Its Mission to Increase Student Recruitment and Grow Revenue

The University of Newcastle upon Tyne – also known as Newcastle University – has one foot in the old and one in the new. Located in a city where the Romans built a fort circa 120 AD as the eastern terminus of Hadrian’s Wall, the school is one of England’s leading research universities, sporting top-notch institutes in fields such as cell and molecular biosciences, informatics, human genetics, nanotechnology, and neurosciences, among others.

And, when it comes to information technology, the Newcastle, United Kingdom–based university is at the top of its game, too – as it demonstrated recently when it wielded IT as a tool to drive revenue growth. In fact, the university was recently awarded a Business Achievement Awards medal in the BCS IT Professional Awards 2006, which honors U.K.–based organizations for their use of IT to achieve economic excellence and prosperity.

#### Intense Global Competition

Like many other universities, Newcastle faces intense global competition for international and postgraduate students. While the U.K.’s overall share of that market is going down, Newcastle University’s strategic plan called for doubling its own international and postgraduate student population. “Our focus was to try and find ways to improve the conversion rate of inquiries to applications, applications to acceptances, and acceptances to students,” says Paul Hopkins, chief information officer, who comments that tuition is a major source of revenue for funding substantial capital investments.

Newcastle had already implemented software from the SAP for Higher Education & Research solution portfolio, using it for financial and campus management, human resources, and payroll. “Because we had such a stable, sound SAP environment, it was practical to launch a fast-track, rapid implementation of additional SAP functionality to improve recruitment,” Hopkins says.

Fast-track it had to be – Newcastle had 12 months to put in the new systems and reengineer its business processes for the next academic recruitment cycle. Newcastle did it in 8 months, linking the SAP® Student Lifecycle Management application with student

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inquiries and student applications, plus installing the SAP Customer Relationship Management (SAP CRM) application and the SAP NetWeaver® Business Intelligence (SAP NetWeaver BI) and SAP NetWeaver Portal components.

Today, prospective students use a browser to access the university’s portal where they can apply online, attach documents, view their application status, text message, get visa documents, and make credit card payments. Integrated workflow routes their materials to the appropriate staff members and informs academic selectors when a decision is required. Admissions staff can then use the software to automatically generate acceptance, rejection, or conditional offer letters. University personnel leverage the integration between SAP Campus Management, SAP CRM, and SAP NetWeaver BI to manage the entire “customer” relationship – enabling them to track applicants and monitor admission status, engage students until registration, and target recruitment campaigns at specific groups, for example.

“We have seen some excellent results so far,” Hopkins says. “While applications are down 10% from last year, we are more than 25% ahead in firm acceptances. It used to take between 40 and 50 days to make a decision on a postgraduate student’s application – we have that down to less than 7 days on average. And there are instances where we will make a decision within four hours of receiving the student’s application.”

The new business processes are a big hit with teaching staff. “The reaction from our academics has been truly outstanding,” Hopkins says. “The new software relieved the academic staff of a lot of administration paperwork so they can now concentrate on teaching and research, but still see what’s happening with every student application. The experience was transformational. We now have extremely enthusiastic users. Also, by eliminating much of the non-value-added tasks associated with managing paper-based applications, our existing clerical staff members have absorbed all of the workload transferred from the academics without any increase in headcount.”

### **Business Case: Growth**

Newcastle is shifting its research and teaching direction to meet the needs of 21st century industry, medicine, and society – a change that calls for substantial capital investments supported through increased tuition income. “If we wanted to double our postgraduate and international students within five years, we had to put in the necessary systems and reengineer our business processes to achieve that gain,” Hopkins says. “With the U.K. share of that market declining, our business objective was unachievable unless we could reverse the market trend.”

In addition to the software, Newcastle chose SAP implementation assistance. Says Hopkins, “The support we had from SAP was unstinting. The people we worked with – software architects, consultants, and programmers from across the world – were superb.”

While the project focused on recruitment, the university saw that it could reuse its new capabilities to serve alumni, existing students, and staff. “This has enabled us to look into many other areas for business process improvement,” Hopkins says. For example, Newcastle plans to use SAP NetWeaver BI for financial reporting; extend SAP CRM to alumni fund-raising staff; add SAP NetWeaver Portal functionality to support student and staff services; and take advantage of workflow to streamline procurement.

Newcastle now feels it has a competitive edge. According to Hopkins, “There are two main streams of revenue for universities: from teaching and research. Teaching revenue is usually the largest income. We now have a technique that allows Newcastle to exploit and grow our postgraduate and international student marketplace that is superior to what we see at comparable universities.”

Newcastle credits SAP for helping it attain that advantage. “SAP is a large company with a professional approach to software,” Hopkins says. “It has a range of integrated products, unlike niche software houses that specialize in our sector. It is the sort of software company you can continue to rely on. When you approach SAP as a long-term partner, you are able to get tremendous benefits out of the software.”

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