ICT Forum – March 2012
Business Services and Projects Report

The paper provides an update on the status of the UAS Systems Development Programme.

1. Priority investment areas

The main priority developments for 2011/12, as agreed by the UAS Information Systems Board, are:

- to progress the new HR systems programme, with final completion in 2011/12;
- to complete the implementation of the new Development and Alumni Relations System, complete rollout to early adopter colleges and departments, and rollout the system to further colleges and departments over a two year period;
- to progress the implementation the new student administration system, SITS, to replace the Oracle Student System by July 2013;
- to progress the re-implementation of the Oracle Financials system to next release, R12, with final completion by May 2013;
- to continue with the planned replacement of Resolve, the University's research costing and pricing tool, with final completion planned for late 2012.

An update on the main initiatives is given below.

2. Progress and status by area

Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) Programme
The HRIS business case was approved by Council in July 2009 and the HRIS Programme was launched in November 2009. This followed a comprehensive review of the HR information requirements and processes across the University.

Within the overall HRIS programme there are five major implementation projects (Recruitment, Personnel Administration, Budgeting and Forecasting, Training Administration, and Payroll). The e-recruitment functionality has been rolled out to almost departments. Following a second pilot, in December 2011 the Programme Board agreed to go live with the Personnel functionality. A phased rollout is now underway for all other departments and is due to complete in July.

Work on the Payroll module is underway with parallel running scheduled for the main payroll for June and July April and a final implementation date of September planned. Further details can be found at http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/hrisprogramme.

Development and Alumni Relations System (DARS)

The new fundraising database (Blackbaud Enterprise CRM) to support the new collaborative and cohesive process of development and alumni relations process is now in use in a growing number of colleges, departments, and overseas offices.

The focus of the programme is now on further rollout to more colleges and departments following approval in June 2010 for a two year programme of work. DARS is now in use in 17 colleges, departments, and offices.

Further information can be found at the DARS website http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/dars

Student Systems Replacement Programme

The Student Systems Programme is overseeing the replacement and improvement of our current range of IT-based systems used in support of the administration of applicants and students. There are three main components to the programme:

1. To prioritise the replacement of the functions of the University's existing core student records system, the Oracle Student System (OSS), by August 2013 when Oracle will stop providing support for it;
2. To work on better integration and data-sharing between the new student records system and other systems that are used in support of applicants and student administration, and to improve administrative processes;
3. To review those other systems to determine whether they are meeting requirements, and if they are not, to carry out development or replacement work where appropriate.

Following a procurement phase in 2011, the SITS:Vision system from Tribal selected to replace OSS. Work is now well underway under the direction of Workstreams that have been set-up in order to oversee the development and implementation of each area of the new system. Each workstream is led by a Chair who is a senior member of academic or administrative staff with expertise and interest in the workstream's activities.

Finance Systems

The current version of the Oracle Financials system will be out of support in late 2013. This means that any bugs or issues will no longer be fixed by Oracle. As these could occur in any area, GL, Grants, Purchasing, operating without this guaranteed support is a risk to the University it is unwilling to take. A business case was approved last year for the first stage of a re-implementation to the latest release, R12. This re-implementation also provides us with the opportunity to review the existing finance processes, improve key system processes and revisit and align customisations and interfaces.

The R12 project is the first phase of a programme, which focuses on implementing the new version of Oracle and putting in some new functionality. In order to avoid overloading departments, some changes will be deferred until a next phase of the programme, an example of this might be e-expenses.

The project is now well underway and is being carried out with support from Hitachi Consulting. Implementation is scheduled for May 2013.

Resolve Replacement

Resolve is the University's research costing, and pricing and approval tool used to calculate the Full Economic Costs (FEC) of a sponsored research project and then determine the price according to the requirements of each sponsor. The current in-house developed system no longer meets the University's requirements.

Unit 4, a third party supplier of HE systems, have been engaged to build a new system for both Oxford and Cambridge. Unit 4 will then create a new product for sale to other HE institutions. This collaborative approach will bring further cost savings to the original plan.

The majority of the system has now been developed and work is progressing on the last few areas, including interfaces with other systems. The team have thoroughly tested the costing functionality from end to end, including manually checking all the calculations in the new system. The developers are now busy dealing with any bugs and issues that were found.

Department staff will become increasingly involved in the project over the course of 2012. Further details can be found at http://www.x5project.net/ .

Infrastructure Modernisation Programme

Following an initial review project in 2009/10, the PRAC Budget Sub-Committee authorised a comprehensive refresh of BSP's technical infrastructure covering servers, data management, networks, security and access, disaster recovery and data centre management.

The programme has now completed and has delivered improved capacity, performance, and resilience for the IBM pSeries servers that underpin our enterprise level systems, and improvements to our virtual infrastructure, storage, and networks. The programme has thereby delivered an infrastructure that is more cost-efficient and resilient, less dependent on human intervention for recovery and easier to maintain, whilst minimising disruption to end users.

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22 March 2012