

University of Glasgow Supports 30,000 User Community with Hornbill's Supportworks



'Ancient' University invests in state of the art IT service management software to support diverse service desks across organisation.

The University of Glasgow is the fourth oldest university in the English-speaking world. Founded in 1451, it has spent the last half-millennium earning an international reputation for research innovation, making connections with experts in global business, and inspiring thinkers, from eminent scientist Lord Kelvin to the father of economics, Adam Smith. Building on such vast experience, it's no surprise that Glasgow is in the top 1% of the world's universities today (Times Higher Education Supplement World Rankings).

Ranked in the top ten in the UK for research, and a member of the elite Russell Group of 20 major research universities, Glasgow provides an education that inspires respect from employers and satisfaction from students. Welcoming more than 15,000 undergraduates, 4,900 postgraduates and around 5,000 adult learners each year, it attracts students from Iceland to India, from Cardiff to Korea and from South America to the south of England. Finding community within diversity, the University's students come from more than 120 countries around the world to build friendships and networks that last a lifetime.

The University relies upon its IT systems to support its staff and students across all areas - in teaching and research, as well as the administration and support required across its faculties and services. To enhance the support to its IT users, the IT team has invested in Hornbill's Supportworks IT Service Management software.

Proven Service Management Solution

The IT department had originally been using a call logging solution, but was increasingly finding that it could not be adapted to meet their changing needs. Having decided to review the market, the team evaluated solutions from several leading suppliers including the incumbent supplier, and Supportworks from Hornbill.

"We selected Supportworks for its functionality, ability to be customised and its user friendly look and feel," said William Wright, Helpdesk and Training Manager of IT Services at University of Glasgow. "For us it is really important that the product is easy to use, in order that we can encourage its adoption across the organisation. The product has to deliver tangible productivity benefits very easily."

The diversity of the IT support groups across the University was also a key factor in the selection of Hornbill's Supportworks. The solution needed to be easily customizable and to offer a level of access across the wide range of software platforms - Linux, MAC, UNIX and web platform - used by the different IT teams.

The solution is used to provide user support from a

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Business Benefits:

- New workflow processes have improved change management procedures and provide audit trail.
- Customised call forms and processes ensure data collection and storage to meet regulatory compliance.
- Central service desk provides first point of call for service.
- Reporting provides accurate statistics on user demand and service for trend analysis and performance management.
- SelfService portal has reduced number of calls to service desk.

centralised service desk on incidents and service requests of all kinds, and has also started to be adopted by other IT support teams across the faculties. It has been much more widely adopted than its predecessor and has fostered greatly improved inter-team communication and cooperation.

Easily Customized

Since installing Supportworks, the team has successfully customised the solution for two key areas - for change management processes and the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Office.

Adopting industry best practice, the University has customised Supportworks to provide a bespoke module for change approval and for publishing the forward schedule of change, replacing a manual process with consistent and easy to use workflow-driven automation.

The IT team defined the change process logic using Supportworks' Visual Process Management Engine (VPME) and created new forms to enable them to capture key data. The new method provides a uniform approach to change management, a single place to look for forthcoming changes and visibility of proposed changes for both the internal IT team and customers.

"Supportworks processes have replaced patchy notification methods where faculties or communities of users were advised of changes in an ad-hoc way, with a published schedule that is sent in advance of changes," explained Wright. "We have adapted Supportworks to the way that we work. It suits our needs very well and provides a formal audit trail to a more consistent and improved quality standard."

Regulatory Compliance

The University's Data Protection and Freedom of Information Office has used the functionality within Supportworks to design custom forms and data fields which greatly improve the quality and ease of data capture and retrieval. Improved workflows and processes have also led to greater efficiencies within the department, and the system continues to grow with the team's ongoing business requirements.

Johanna King, Head of the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Office at the University of Glasgow, said: "Since its introduction to the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Office in August 2008, Supportworks has made an enormous and welcome difference to our work.

"The system allows the team to accurately track and monitor calls and provide a full and meaningful audit trail, which is vital when dealing with legislation-driven timescales and the possibility of external regulator scrutiny."

Improving Customer Service

Since implementing the software, the IT team has seen improvements in customer satisfaction, demonstrated by feedback from its service questionnaire. The team has been able to process many more calls and hence support the centralisation of services, and is able to measure its performance with automated reports generated by Supportworks.

"Supportworks makes our service operations more manageable. With the automated generation and distribution of reports and call tracking - it makes sure things don't get forgotten. And users like the regular feedback on progress of their request," said Wright.

The DP and FOI Office has also benefited from the report functionality. King explains; "We have achieved increased staff efficiencies through the production of reports, which are clearer and more user friendly than those previously available. Supportworks continues to assist and enhance the work of the DP and FOI team and we look forward to using it more in the future."

The Customer SelfService portal has also reduced pressure on the service desk - an increasing proportion of calls are now logged via the portal, especially from students. The request or problem captured by the portal is categorised by the user, often enabling direct routing to the required specialist, hence faster response, compared to those received by email.

Future Plans

Following the success to date, the IT team intends to champion the system and encourage its adoption by more service desks across the University. A regional support centre is already in the process of implementing Supportworks to provide support to users in Further Education Colleges across West Scotland.

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