



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

NUIG Admissions, Fees & Registration Process 2011

Management and Professional Services Ltd – Company profile

Management and Professional Services Ltd (MAPS) is a Galway based company that focuses on providing high quality services and solutions to a broad range of customers both nationally and internationally. MAPS's customer base includes many public sector organisations as well as clients from private industry and the company strives to create and maintain long term successful relationships with clients.

Through strategic links in place with industry leading vendors, MAPS can deliver an array of consultancy and advisory services based on best practices, best of breed technology, best value and most importantly best fit based on a deep understanding of business. As an organisation, the company goal is to excel at providing objective advice on established and quality assured best of breed technologies and business solutions. MAPS's reputation for delivering unbiased advice is founded upon the premise of having the requisite experience and expertise across a broad range of disciplines.

Project Introduction

Since its establishment in 1845, NUI Galway has become one of Irelands leading centres of academic excellence. With over 17,000 students and 2,200 staff, NUI Galway has a distinguished reputation for teaching and research excellence in the fields of arts, social science, and Celtic studies, business, public policy and law, engineering and informatics; medicine, nursing and health sciences, and science. In today's market driven climate it is the Universities brand that plays the key role in attracting and sustaining this level of students. MAPS were engaged by NUIG to review and analyse the existing process of Admissions, Registration and Fees, identify risks and make recommendations which would allow NUIG to achieve process optimisation. With a greater than ever emphasis on budget scrutiny, Admissions, Registration and Fees must derive maximum value for money from its allocated resources while ultimately it endeavors to enhance the overall Student Experience. The subject of student Fees can be a delicate one where expectations are raised; Students expect and are entitled to exceptional levels of service from their chosen University.

Project Background

Prior to each academic year all new students to NUIG must be processed through the departments of Admissions, Registration and Fees while existing students are processed through Registration and Fees. Against a background of increasing competition for funding and the reputational importance of positive student experience, the process of administering the student record from admissions through registration and fee payment to progression and conferring is a critical aspect of the business. This administration directly impacts on various departments and events in the academic year (class and exam scheduling etc.). Therefore the efficient and effective operation of this overall process is the key to enhancing the Student Experience and the development and maintenance of the \University brand. NUIG have decided that this crucial area of its business needs a complete



review as it strives to bolster its reputation and maximize Student satisfaction levels across the University.

MAPS were engaged by NUIG to review the existing process of Admissions, Registration and Fees, with a view to:

- Establishing potential process improvements
- Reducing and simplifying administration
- Establish appropriate process boundaries and identify ownership of processes
- Establish links between departments and identify knock on effects of departmental processes

Solution

The MAPS methodology for this project was to:

- Process analysis and documentation. Processes were examined in terms of the inputs, activity steps and outputs and a process map with role identification and ownership lines was produced for each of the processes and the sub-processes of Progression, Syllabus Management, Online Registration, and Helpdesk Function.
- Evaluation of the existing processes, identifying any gaps and risks.
- Recommendations on identified gaps and risks.

In the initial phase of analysing and documenting the selected processes Maps engaged directly with staff from the Registration Teams of Syllabus and Progression and the Fees Office. This was done to get the most accurate representation of the workings and complexities of each of the processes and sub-processes and their implications on other teams, departments and events within Academic calendar. MAPS spent time with staff operating the Registration Helpdesk and Hotline at the high volume busy period towards the end of August (CAO first round offers) to get a better understanding of the level of queries and issues experienced by Students/Parents. MAPS also carried out a detailed analysis of the layout and functionality of the current NUIG Website. Each process reviewed was analysed and documented and detailed process maps were created which highlighted key activities and ownership boundaries. This evaluation of each process resulted in the identification of several gaps within the processes and risks arising from the processes. Cause and effect analysis was carried out in order to fully understand the implications and knock on effects of each team activities.

MAPS ascertained that each team has a deep level of knowledge and understanding of the processes within its team. However these processes and the implications they have on other teams sooner or later in the Academic year do not appear to be completely and consistently understood by other teams. MAPS established team boundaries and identified key areas where ownership of activities falls to more than one team. Based on the identified gaps and risks Maps were able to make recommendations on process improvements within the selected processes and also put forward a list of improvements to enhance the NUIG Website/Student interface. There were also a number of recommendations where automation of processes and manual updates of the administration system would yield substantial time savings at important periods in the calendar. This would free up staff to carry out quality assurance and vital validation checks of areas such as syllabus management and progression. This in turn would lead to further savings in time and money by ensuring accurate



scheduling of programs and exams. Central to the successful implementation of these recommendations was managing a communications strategy whereby staff members from each department could engage in structured dialogue. MAPS achieved this by issuing its report in draft format on a number of occasions for comment and feedback. This gave stakeholders the opportunity to document any concerns regarding change, resource planning etc. and allowed them to prepare for open forum. Following the final presentation of the report, the floor was open to discussion which allowed NUIG to prioritise the recommendations and develop the implementation plan.

Conclusion

This project was a huge success. All stakeholders recognised that while MAPS had clearly identified and documented the flow of activities and processes for each business entity as required it had also unearthed a substantial amount of potential optimisation points within the overall process of Admissions, Registration and Fees. By engaging directly with staff members in each department and team, MAPS reviewed beyond the normal workings of the departments and delved deep into the inner workings of how each team evolved. This deep understanding of each team's architecture and its complex relationships with and implications on other departments allowed MAPS to thoroughly investigate the overall process. Through understanding and careful listening MAPS could compile recommendations which would provide NUIG with the smooth operations of the Admissions, Registration and Fees process through staff optimisation. MAPS concluded that key to the successful implementation of this solution was communications and the relationship between teams. By structuring its findings and final report around the common goals shared by all, MAPS encouraged all teams to engage in positive dialogue and debate.

Through its in-depth knowledge of business structures MAPS were able to present NUIG with a comprehensive and cost effective recommendation for each of the risks and problem areas identified and provide a co-ordinated and structured solution which could be easily rolled out. This would not only yield substantial time and cost savings but in the long run would greatly enhance the Student Experience and serve to preserve NUIG's reputation as one of Ireland's leading centres of academic excellence.

References

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