

Newcastle College Implement DRS Solution to Improve Key Data Records



Newcastle College is the largest Further Education establishment in the North East, with over 40,000 students and 1,000 members of staff, and has more courses in more subjects than any other comparable institution.

Demonstrating success

In 2005, the College achieved a Grade 1 Ofsted inspection which put it amongst the top three in England and Wales. This outstanding achievement helped it to win the prestigious Learning and Skills Beacon Status, demonstrating its success as a well led and managed learning provider, proven to deliver outstanding teaching and learning facilities.



Newcastle College - The largest FE establishment in the North East

Improving standards

Newcastle College is continually looking to maintain and improve standards and wanted to implement a solution to improve the quality and efficiency of its record attendance and enrolment data for students.

Already making use of Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) technology for Qualifications on Entry and various student surveys, it decided to integrate its attendance and enrolment system into this process. This was the next level of data that the college wished to collect electronically.

Compatibility

As the only company to provide OMR technology compatible with Newcastle College's EBS MIS System, leading educational data capture specialists, DRS, were on hand to help. Coming well recommended to the College, and after implementing a successful pilot for attendance and enrolment in the 2002/2003 academic year, DRS offered an ideal solution.

Without all sites having access to PCs, there remained a real need for paper registration forms. With no change to the initial collection of data - the paper register being familiar to staff - there was a quick and easy transition period.

“Staff received excellent training from DRS to help them understand OMR concepts. The Optical Mark Reader itself is simple to use and easy to train our staff up on.”

Maureen McCartney, MIS Manager

Staff at Newcastle College took well to the introduction of OMR technology and soon appreciated the benefits, not least the ability to check guided hours across the year on actual registers, and track attendance across the College sites for EMA payment purposes. Due to the size of the College, it would have been almost impossible to accurately record this data in the past.

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Recording attendance

Newcastle College now use the DRS OMR solution to capture data from over 40,000 student enrolments each year and to record their attendance. Equipment is situated in all key locations on and off campus and the centralised MIS management allows production of reports for the College as a whole, not just for individual schools.



The OMR technology in use

DRS technology has allowed Newcastle College to obtain fast and accurate attendance and retention data.

It has seen a considerable saving in the time taken to manually key in records and cross-checking multiple paper registers, allowing staff to run queries on individual students or whole courses, providing access to immediate and accurate data. In short, quality data is available in real-time, whenever Newcastle College need it.

Following this success, the College is considering other possible uses of the OMR for the future. The Destination of Leavers Survey is not yet a requirement of the LSC, but Newcastle College do conduct this survey for internal use.

Using additional software from DRS, surveys can be produced quickly and easily and once completed, scanned through the OMRs, enabling reports to be produced immediately. This helps to save a significant amount of manual keying.

Newcastle College is also exploring the possibility of using the system to help process data from Key Skills Entry Forms.

Worldwide technology

DRS OMR technology is used worldwide across the education sector for a vast range of applications including attendance, registration, student surveys, examination marking, qualifications on entry and processing.

DRS continue to maintain its position as a market leader in the provision of the fastest, most accurate and most cost-effective solutions to data capture problems.

For further information on the full range of DRS products and services, please contact a member of the education team.

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