



Scientia.



University of Dundee

Integrating Syllabus+ and Tribal's SITS student records system with Connect

Dundee Fast Facts:

- 17,000 students
- 3,000 staff
- 9 academic schools
- Centralised timetabling office (3 staff)
- Founded in 1881
- Strong research arm
- Scottish University of the Year 2016 & 2017 (The Times Good University Guide)

"We needed best-in-class integration between two of our most important applications: timetabling and student records. That solution was Connect."

Andy Ross

Service Delivery Manager,
Student Services
University of Dundee

The Challenge

Dundee moved to a centralised timetabling approach in 2010/11. Initially, there was no data integration between its student records system—Tribal's SITS—and its timetabling software, Syllabus+ Enterprise. This meant two isolated datasets, a lot of duplicated work, and many errors in the resulting timetable.

Between 2012 and 2016, Dundee used a script developed in-house to get these business-critical applications talking. This enabled a one-time import of Modules, Programmes of Study (by School), Students and module selections (by School) from SITS to Syllabus+.

Producing a timetable from this data involved creating theoretical Student Sets based on Programmes of Study. But the vast number of possibilities meant that Dundee was catering for module combinations never picked in practice. The process was time-consuming, not responsive to subsequent changes, and the output was impossible to timetable. Constantly striving for improvement in its processes, Dundee was keen to ditch its unwieldy legacy scripts in place of new, reliable and supported solution.

The Solution

Connect is an innovative integration platform that delivers seamless connections between the Scientia product suite and other software applications within an institution.

Connect ticked all the must-have boxes in Dundee's wish list. They wanted a fully supported solution which would :

- Improve the quality of their data;
- Be simpler to implement than scripting, with a shallower learning curve;
- Be easier to adapt to meet changing business processes; and
- Enable them to manage a single dataset





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The Outcome

We set up a daily transfer of a dataset from SITS to Syllabus+ which includes Current Students, Departments, Programme of Study and Staff (Tutors). Connect flags up any changes but it doesn't delete any data, leaving the Timetabling Team in control. Taking the time to properly map data fields has drastically reduced duplication.

"It's a daily cleanse of inconsistencies. Issues only need to be resolved in one system."

Steve Boarder, Central Timetabling Team at Dundee

The quality of Dundee's student data has improved significantly. *"It's also given us benefits that we hadn't considered,"* said Steve. *"We're now in a position where we can concoct tutorial allocations – small group allocations – and give those to the schools to publish. In previous years, we got the schools to do that. It's less work for more benefit all round."*

"The amount of data that it gets through, fast, is really impressive"

Andy Ross, Service Delivery Manager at Dundee

Another unintended outcome is improved space utilisation through increased occupancy. *"We need more robust analysis but we believe that we are now able to schedule more classes within the same space—or make formerly poorly-used space available for ad-hoc bookings,"* said Steve.

So what's next for Connect at Dundee? *"It's a very rich piece of software with many functions and opportunities,"* said Steve. *"We're moving to a Cloud-based student records system by 2019. If we've moved to Syllabus+ Anywhere, we'll obviously be looking for Cloud-to-Cloud integration – no data held on site."* No doubt that will bring fresh challenges. *"That's the benefit of it being a supported system,"* said Andy. *"That's for Scientia to worry about, not us!"*