

Improving project and programme management within the Estates Development Department



The University of York was founded in 1963 with a cohort of just 230 students. After five decades of expansion, the university now comprises nine colleges, thirty academic departments and around 16,000 students. A member of the Russell Group of research-led universities, York ranks in the THE World University Rankings top 150 institutions – one of the youngest universities to do so.

The university's main campus is in the south-east of York, a short distance from the city's historic centre. A recent £750m expansion plan has seen the university extend its campus to include new laboratories and teaching spaces, as well as a sports village.

The Challenge

Projects within York's Estates Development Department were being managed with a number of Excel-based systems, giving limited visibility of management information. The Department had been undergoing a Process Review and identified the need for more robust management of the project life-cycle, including financial information and quality control.

A new solution would need to integrate with the University's financial system, Agresso, to import details of orders, payments and accruals. It would also need to be highly-configurable to reflect the new procedures and, where relevant, support adherence to them.

"The Imprest software provides us with a single solution for managing all project work and is integrated with our financial system, Agresso, enabling all project information to be monitored and reported from within a single system."

Gary Ashmore
Head of Estates Development
University of York



Case Study: **Imprest**

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The Solution

Impressed by its configurability and collaborative design, the University of York chose Imprest to overcome its project and programme management challenges. Imprest's one-stop shop approach meant that York could replace its Excel-based project-tracking system with a single integrated solution. By configuring Imprest to support best practice, based on the University's tailored RIBA method, York could achieved unprecedented adherence to stage planning and gateway management procedures. Improved transparency and reporting would make early corrective action easier to achieve.

The implementation would be managed using the PRINCE2 method, enabling Scientia to understand York's working practices and aspirations for change and for the University to understand how Imprest can most effectively be used within its environment. This ensured the project scope was clear and expectations would be met.

The Outcome

Implementing Imprest at York has provided a transparent view of projects across the Estates programme, measurably raising the standard and efficiency of the Department. Project managers can generate monthly highlight reports direct from the system, in a consistent format which can be easily shared and understood by all stakeholders.

Imprest can be installed on an intranet or provided as a hosted service. For this implementation the system is hosted by Scientia. It includes a secure network and firewall, system backups, off-site storage and remote upgrades, significantly reducing on-site consultancy time. The University provides secure access to the system to staff as required.

The Excel-based timesheet system has been replaced with the Imprest timesheet module, which integrates with York's Agresso finance system, significantly improving the process of recording worked hours and paying contractors. The introduction and management of robust financial control and quality management procedures was at the top of York's must-have list, and Imprest has been instrumental in achieving that.