campuslabs

This study enumerates how we worked together with one of our leading clients in implementing CampusLabs ERP in their campus.

IISER Mohali becomes one of the most sophisticated IT-savvy campuses in India

Background

The Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Mohali was set up by the Government of India through the MHRD. IISER's mission is to carry out research in frontier areas of science and provide quality science education with key focus on knowledge creation and research. IISER believes in integrating the science streams, namely Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology and hence offers interdisciplinary courses in all these disciplines and Earth Sciences. IISER Mohali offers Integrated MS and PhD programmes. There are currently 560 students, 77 Faculty members and 53 support staff.

Objectives

IISER envisioned implementing a robust ERP solution that can integrate all its operations across all the departments whereby manual labour is reduced and reports are generated instantly from a centralized data centre. IISER aimed to standardize reports, achieve consistency and data transparency.
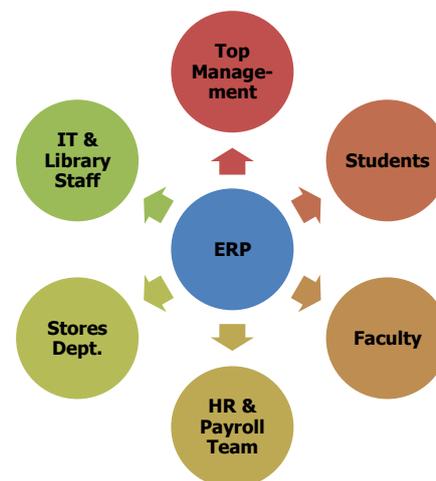
Timelines

The project had four phases with required modules to be implemented as listed below:

Phase	Modules
Phase 1	Academics, Students, & Examination
Phase 2	Library Management
Phase 3	Financials: Fees, HR & Purchase
Phase 4	Other Supporting Modules

The first two phases, which were started in January 2010, went live on 1st January 2011 within a month of being completed. The third phase commenced in July 2011 and ended in March 2013. The final phase started in January 2013 and to be finished in June.

Stakeholders

Challenges & Solutions

One of the biggest challenges IISER faced was in shortlisting prospective PhD candidates that was done through a varying and dynamic criteria. This process is now handled efficiently by CampusLabs with the following solutions:

- Students today respond to IISER's PhD program advertisement through CampusLabs online portal by filling up online application forms.
- Complete candidate data is captured which is used for candidate shortlisting. Entire communication to candidates is done through the system on a single click.
- After selection, the entire student life cycle, their batch creation, their classes, registration for courses, assignments, teaching notes, fee submission, hostel admission etc. is done through the system. Student's portal allows them to interact with the system.

The second biggest challenge for any research institution is to manage the paper work for projects, namely proposals and expenditure. CampusLabs allows faculty and researchers to manage this paper work.

The trail of all the documentation is kept and at any given point of time users can see at what point of their document lies and who has taken what action.

Our Approach

CampusLabs is a highly robust and flexible software that allows changes on the go, while maintaining data integrity. It is important to note that IISER too adapted to changes recommended by the system in order to make processes more robust and efficient. So the whole system was deployed by taking and giving feedback. The support is continuous. Any new customization or functionality requests are dealt with as per contract. As shifting priorities and specifications affect any project's timeframe and consequently the cost and risk, scope creep was minimized by treating exceptions as exceptions.

Issues/Conflict Management

It is natural that issues and conflicts arise when a software solution is implemented, but we adhere to a clear resolution process. Sometimes, customer viewpoints may differ to those of our deployment team's. To address these conflicts, an escalation matrix was set up on both sides. Regular ERP review meetings were held, and at peak times, this was as frequent as monthly. The matrix involved key stakeholders at all levels, from the lowest to highest of authority. Most issues were resolved on a daily basis. As our ERP system is robust, no major changes were requested in the system core, but in the periphery.

These requests were mutually discussed and implemented through a well-defined change request process.

Lessons Learnt

One of the key lessons we learnt in general is that the support and involvement of top management is essential for a successful ERP implementation. We are committed to working collaboratively with our customers. Because implementing an ERP solution can be a major milestone in an institution's history, they should be ready for change. If this may even require a business process reengineering, it is better to be prepared for the same.

Change Management

Fully realizing the ERP's automation potential and data capabilities will depend on the implementation quality, which includes managing the cost and timeline of the implementation. Communication is thus vital in ensuring the project delivery. The risk of any communication gap was mitigated by choosing Project Managers who not only had the required expertise and domain knowledge, but also the required communication skills to work with a diverse group of stakeholders to accomplish the required tasks. In equipping people for change, ERP training is provided initially for a week or two, but we had requests for longer training. IISER-Mohali is excited about the whole integrated system. There are very few institutions in India who have achieved the level of sophistication that IISER Mohali has in ERP.

About Us

Ecole Solutions offers a wide range of Technology Solutions that influence Teaching and Learning Delivery processes for improved learning outcomes and undertake required interventions to ensure desired learning outcomes. With partners from across the globe along with an in-depth industry and business process knowledge, proven expertise and resources, Ecole Solutions has the ability to mobilize the right people, skills and technologies to implement solutions that will help educational institutions achieve significant process efficiencies. Ecole Solutions implements CampusLabs ERP at educational institutions in India.

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