

# Customer case studies

## West Suffolk College

Recently awarded 'Good' with many 'Outstanding' features in its Ofsted report, West Suffolk College (WSC) is one of the largest colleges in Suffolk. Employing over 800 staff, it provides vocational training across Suffolk and Norfolk and was the first provider in the country to achieve the Training Quality Standard in all 7 areas.

**"It's about having an HR system that staff can use themselves. SelectHR brings everything together into one easy-to-use package."**

Jo Wyatt  
Co-ordinator, Faculty of Quality and Professional Development



<b>Industry</b>	Further Education
<b>Geographic</b>	East Anglia
<b>Employees</b>	886
<b>Solution</b>	SelectHR Web Edition
<b>Modules</b>	Online recruitment Learning & development Self-service Document management Dashboard

### The need to upgrade

Long-time users of Select software, WSC installed SelectHR's original system in 1998. Although the College was making maximum use of its existing functionality, there was a growing need to unite its Professional Development (PD) information with HR.

"There is a natural crossover between the two areas and we wanted to manage this better" says Jo Wyatt, Co-ordinator, Faculty of Quality and Professional Development.

Heather Daniels, Systems Development and Data Analysis Officer, agrees. "Because we were maintaining separate databases, it was easy for information to slip through the net. For example, new starters needed to be booked on induction courses and training needs identified at appraisals also needed booking.

We had to develop time consuming workarounds to accommodate this. It was also becoming increasingly difficult to satisfy the ad-hoc reporting needs from management staff across the College."

It was the demand for increased visibility, greater efficiency and improved management information that convinced WSC to upgrade to SelectHR Web Edition, and implement its training module.

### Purchase factors

"We chose SelectHR Web Edition for many reasons" says Jo. "For me, it's about having an HR system that staff can use themselves. SelectHR brings everything together into one easy-to-use package." For Heather, flexibility of the system was a key factor. Despite not having any formal technical knowledge, Heather was assured she would be able to customise the solution herself.

“I love how easy it is simply to add a column, tick box or additional field. You can just add something and it’s ready to use.”

### **The implementation**

As the Project Officer, overall responsibility for managing the implementation naturally fell to Heather. Along with help from PD Co-ordinator Jo, Deputy Principal David Howells and Head of HR Tricia O’Sullivan, the team worked with Access Select to implement the software in just three months. This process had its ups and downs as Heather recalls. “I took full-time responsibility for the project, which definitely helped – but the Access Select consultant was great too.

For example, Access Select’s consultant was able to transfer all the training records from our separate training database into SelectHR Web Edition – 22,000 records in one day! We hit our deadline, and went live in time for the start of the new academic year.”

### **Benefits of SelectHR**

Jo is now able to access all the information she needs to manage training effectively. “All new starter information now passes through to their employee record and is available for me to view. Before, there would have been a delay in assessing the training required; now, it’s all pre-booked and ready for staff when they arrive for their first day.”

Via web-based self-service, college staff are now able to book training themselves. A single screen provides detailed information about what courses are available, who’s teaching them, even what room they’re in.

“Thanks to SelectHR, I spend far less time fielding calls and can focus on maintaining the quality of our courses,” Jo continues.

For each course, Jo can also run an attendance list for staff to sign.

“SelectHR enables us to send an automatic e-mail to the line manager if an employee does not attend, which has led to a big decrease in no-shows. Going forward, this will be essential if we decide to charge line managers for those employees who fail to attend, helping us gain a greater return on our training investment.”

### **Absence**

Using the manager self-service facility, the College’s HR department can quickly and easily capture absences as they arise, whether the person is calling in sick or submitting a request for holiday.

This information is then made immediately available to managers, meaning they can log in at any time of day and view live holiday and absence requests as well as the bigger picture of days lost over the previous weeks and months.

Heather finds this area of the system very flexible. “It’s really easy to mould the system to meet our needs – for example, updating the standard software to encompass two levels of approval as opposed to one.”

### **Recruitment**

SelectHR streamlines the recruitment process for both applicants and the HR team, making it in Heather’s words, “much quicker and easier to hire people.” For example, vacancies can be posted to the College’s website in a few clicks.

A series of well-designed forms make it easy for applicants to enter the required information and all these details are retained at every stage. Successful applicants are progressed seamlessly through to SelectHR so that new starters can be booked on the relevant training courses.

### **Appraisals**

The ability to prepare and update appraisals online is Head of Faculty Barbara Beaton’s favourite part of the system. “I really like being able to write up appraisals from home – it gives me flexibility.”

For staff, a series of intuitive web forms makes appraisals easy to complete and in both cases, an email is generated when further input from either side is required. Integration to SelectHR means managers can view staff training history at any time and identify any training needs from the list of courses offered by PD during the appraisal itself.

### **Dashboards**

Dashboards provide live information in a series of graphical reports, showing KPIs such as gender and ethnic split in graphs and charts. Each view is configurable, enabling each member of WSC’s management to log in and view information that’s relevant to them. “This ensures I keep on top of everything from approving holiday to remembering whose birthdays it is that week!” says Barbara.

### **The future**

Has SelectHR lived up to expectations? “Certainly!” says Heather. “Like any new system it’ll take time to bed in, but we’ve already gained far greater flexibility and efficiency. It’s constantly evolving, but that’s because the modifications are so easy to do.”

In the future, WSC will consider integrating SelectHR with their bureau payroll service and installing the latest web-based Timesheets module for its non-teaching staff. Would WSC recommend SelectHR? “Definitely!” says Heather. “We have all been really pleased with what we have been able to achieve using the software.”

### **Further information**

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