



The University of Essex

The University of Essex underpins ambitions for leading domestic and global research with Unit4 Research Management

The situation

The University of Essex is recognized as a leading research-intensive University, both nationally and internationally. As part of its strategic plan, it intends to increase the volume of external research funding, the diversity of funding sources and the rate of cost recovery on research funding.

The need

As well as the need for growth, a number of internal and external factors were making research administration increasingly complex. Historically, for instance, the University used a variety of systems to manage research; this meant information was often difficult to find and keep up to date. With funders increasingly requesting greater transparency and increased governance, this was inefficient and a risk to the University.

“We wanted to improve efficiency, so that we can support planned growth and provide complete transparency without increasing time spent on

administration resources. We also do not want our highly skilled academics to be spending valuable time on seeking out information,” said Shereen Anderson, Deputy Director (Research Support) at the University of Essex. “We realized that the best way to address these challenges would be a technology solution that would simplify the complexity of research administration.”

The solution

The University’s Research and Enterprise Office (which is a centralized function providing administrative support for research projects, including pre- and post-award, and ethical and governance oversight) selected Unit4 Research Management to underpin all administration associated with research. The solution is also available to the academic community. Users can interact with information on a variety of important research areas including bids, awards, governance, ethics, costing and pricing. Unit4 Research Management will also be integrated into the University’s existing Unit4 Business World Finance solution.

The benefits

Unit4 Research Management is already enabling the University's highly qualified staff to spend less time on basic administration and more time on value-adding activities that support its ambitions to increase the volume of research funding, the diversity of funding sources and the rate of cost recovery on research funding.

"The Research and Enterprise Office is delivering an improved service to all research stakeholders at the University," said Shereen Anderson, Deputy Director (Research Support) at the University of Essex. "Unit4 Research Management provides them with the information they need, to make decisions that are directly aligned to our strategy. We can also much more easily make a series of financial viability and ethics and governance checks on potential projects. This is valuable, as the University's financial security and reputation is vitally important."

With one version of data truth, the University has a stronger and more robust decision-making process. Academics can quickly use self-service to access useful information, like comparing and modeling project costs, so making a decision about the financial viability of bidding can be made with greater certainty.

"In the first week of going live, the team leader of the Pre-award team told me that the costing process was so much faster and easier," said Phineas Wenlock, Research Systems Manager, at the University of Essex. "Now we are rolling out to departments the workflow authorization to remove a significant administration barrier. Unit4 Research Management means our teams can spend more time on tasks that make a difference to our researchers, the University, and our funders."

The increased efficiencies made possible by Unit4 Research Management are also providing the University with a platform to scale more easily and grow its research services without increasing the size of the Research and Enterprise Office.

"We need world-class tools to continue to be a 'leading research-intensive University, both nationally and internationally,'" commented Phineas Wenlock, Research Systems Manager. "Unit4 is a vital ingredient of our progress towards that goal."



About Unit4

Unit4 is a leading provider of enterprise applications empowering people in service organizations. With annual revenue north of 500M Euro and more than 4200 employees world-wide, Unit4 delivers ERP, industry-focused and best-in-class applications. Thousands of organizations from sectors including professional services, education, public services, not-for-profit, real estate, wholesale, and financial services benefit from Unit4 solutions. Unit4 is in business for people.

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