



**Blueprint
for Universities**

Blueprint in brief

Blueprint is a specialist consultancy that creates business intelligence, performance management and financial planning systems, and data warehouses. We help our customers make better use of a strategic resource: the data they own. Blueprint develops tools that combine and analyse data in new and creative ways, giving our customers the power to make better-informed decisions and manage their performance more effectively.

We have strategic partnerships with SAP Business Objects, Microsoft, Oracle and IBM, and we have experience working with systems provided by many other vendors. We work closely with our clients' IT teams and their internal customers, building bridges between the people who implement and support information systems and those who use them.

Blueprint:


- KPI design & definition
- Performance management
- Budgeting & planning
- Business Intelligence & reporting
- Data warehousing
- Training

What Blueprint can do for your university

A growing number of teaching-led and research intensive universities have discovered that Blueprint designed management information systems can help them maintain the right balance between income and costs, and plan for the future more effectively. With years of experience as a specialist management information consultancy, Blueprint understands how to adapt and customise information systems to meet the particular needs of universities.

Teaching-led universities use our systems to correlate present and projected student numbers with fee income. They can analyse the cost of courses in detail, relating costs to income-streams in order to assess the viability of each course.

They can keep track of changing patterns of student demand, analyse the composition of the student body, and look at the effect of changing the mix between international and UK students. Management information systems make long-term planning quicker and easier, and they facilitate integration, helping to break down departmental barriers and increase efficiency.



Blueprint's information systems help Russell Group universities to improve forecasting of research income, manage research project and faculty budgets, and align their investment activities more closely with their strategic goals. Management information systems help them to analyse research funding patterns, predict income streams more accurately and plan staffing levels to suit future needs.

Perhaps your university could benefit from a conversation with Blueprint. Tell us about the issues you are facing; the chances are that we have run into them before and will be able to recommend a solution. These are some of the questions we have helped universities to answer:

- **Make-up of the student body:**

'Which countries and regions do our students come from? Which socio-economic and ethnic groups do they belong to? What happens to them after they qualify? Is debt an issue for particular groups?'

- **Admissions and student number planning:**

'Which categories of students should we target to satisfy our obligations to stakeholders and secure the university's future? Where should we invest to support predicted patterns of student demand?'

- **Programme and module viability:**

'What are the true costs of each of our courses, taking into account inter-departmental staffing effects? Can we afford to sustain less popular courses that we believe contribute to our reputation?'

- **Income and expenditure management:**

'How can we predict future income streams more accurately? How can we ensure that information known to research project leaders is promptly incorporated into our forecasts?'

- **Workload modelling:**

'How can we align our teaching and research resources with current and future levels of student demand for each of our courses, taking into account tenured, contract and temporary staffing patterns?'

- **End-to-end strategic planning:**

'What are the implications of our strategic plan for future spending on property and staff? Which faculties will need to expand, and which will contract? Where should we invest in order to meet future patterns of demand?'

- **Research project analysis:**

'Currently, I receive one global figure for research income – but I want to break that figure down by department and individual. I'd like to be able to calculate bid success-rates for individuals, and see where the funding is coming from. I'd also like to know what research projects really cost us in terms of the university's time and resources.'

When we set out to design a new management information system, we want to make sure that our solution will be flexible and scalable, allowing for future needs, as well as current ones. Our systems are usually built in 'bite size chunks' according to your priorities. So it's important to devise an overall plan when setting out, to make sure we allow for future requirements.

That's what our Blueprint Framework is all about. It has two main components: Focus Areas and Reporting Themes. We group all your requirements and the issues you are dealing with under these two headings, as the basis for the design of your new system.

- Focus Areas: groupings of the system's primary subject matter – the main issues or 'business questions' that users want it to address.
- Reporting Themes: topics that will be the subject of analysis and reporting within each Focus Area.

The Framework diagram opposite captures current and likely future requirements and provides a joined-up view of information that's currently held in separate locations. We structure data to provide you with a fuller, richer overview – bringing together information that is locked within 'silos', such as individual department and faculty systems.



● The Blueprint Framework for universities

Building management information systems for universities

Blueprint uses industry-leading technologies and our proven approach to MI projects. Usually, we start with the data: we analyse the sources, such as SITS, Agresso, CODA, Midland Trent, SAP and Excel, looking at structure, content and data quality. Then we assess the priorities and plan of action, and develop a long-term strategic MI roadmap, taking into account focus areas, reporting themes, business priorities and technical feasibility.

The data is then combined into one central database and re-purposed for reporting and analysis. As set out in the MI roadmap, the database will become the central point for all reporting and analysis within the university. This central MI database helps universities to move beyond simply reporting data, giving them tools that facilitate deeper analysis and drive people to take action.

Accessing information

Governors and council-members, the executive team, heads of department, programme leaders... Many people within the university can benefit from better information and analysis, but their skills and requirements will vary. We consult end-users to make sure they receive exactly the information they need in the formats that suit them, adding the ability to explore behind the data should they require it.

There are many presentation options:

Dashboards

- See what's going on instantly, using easy-to-understand dials and charts, and find out what's happening behind the headline numbers.

Regular reporting

- Gain easy access to a suite of standard reports that give you answers to the questions you face every day and help you understand progress made against your KPIs.

Ad-hoc reporting

- Give appropriate users the freedom to explore data and obtain information on demand – without having to ask for special reports to be created.

Planning tools

- Present historic, actual and newly-input financial and non-financial information simultaneously, and enable users to drill down through financial reports to reveal the underlying non-financial variables.

Information portals

- Create a single location where users can easily find information and build reports, with personalised views so that individuals can only see the information they are permitted to access.

Microsoft Office

- View live information within familiar Office applications such as Word, PowerPoint and Excel, reducing the need for training and support.

Email

- Send information directly to the people who need to take action, rather than relying on them to access it.

Contacts

Please get in touch if you would like to know more about Blueprint's work with universities or to discuss your needs:

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