Case study

Sector Education
Service Technology Consulting

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Student experience at the heart of Abertay's digital transformation journey

A University offering transformational learning opportunities with ambitions to be at the leading edge in enabling student learning.



Julie Swinbank
Associate Director - Partnerships and Growth

Email julie.swinbank@waterstons.com

Abertay University is a small, dynamic university located in Dundee, Scotland, ranked in the UK top 10 for teaching quality (Times Guide) and in the Scottish top five for student experience (NSS). Renowned for high quality teaching and research, Abertay has been ranked Europe's number one university for computer games education for the last five consecutive years and is a UK leader in cybersecurity. In a fast-changing world, they want to ensure that their research and educational programmes remain relevant and accessible.

Waterstons engaged with Abertay University to define an IT transformation strategy that would enable them to embark on a digital transformation programme of work.

Collaboration is Key

Our first task to develop the IT transformation strategy was to engage with and survey staff and students across the University. We received an overwhelming response, demonstrating clearly that staff and students alike were ready to embark on this digital journey too.

In addition to the surveys, a series of workshops and interviews with key stakeholders were held, intended to tease out a picture of the current IT landscape as well as what people wanted the future to be. Our consultants used their extensive knowledge both of the higher education sector and of wider technology trends to produce a high level five-year roadmap. Most importantly, the roadmap was designed to ensure that the University puts the student at the heart of any developments; the key goal being to ensure the University's position as a leading provider of computer gaming and cyber security programmes is maintained and built upon.

> **"I was really pleased with the different ways Waterstons engaged with our stakeholder groups. The contribution made by our students and staff have really helped influence and shape our transformation journey."**
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> Frazer Greig
> Head of IT Transformation

Working in partnership with Abertay University, we developed options for a comprehensive IT architecture that could be used to deliver the future digital transformation programme across the University in a considered, costed, year on year programme of change.

> **"This digital transformation forms a key part of the University's new Digital Strategy, which we will be working to implement over the next five years. By aligning this strategy with our business goals and the use of new technology, Abertay will embrace a digital culture that will empower staff and students, providing a seamless user experience which is accurate, fast, efficient, consistent, responsive, agile and accessible."**
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> Professor Liz Bacon
> Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Results

The final report gave advice and recommendations on how these changes could be implemented. Any transformation programme requires not only capital investment but also investment in leadership, buy-in and change management. As a relatively small organisation, managing risk and the cost of the change programme is a big deal; but we were able to provide advice on what could be achieved in-house, where to partner with trusted third parties and the value that having a transformation partner to manage the change programme would provide.

Abertay University now have a strategy map, a five-year transformation map, and a full report containing an indicative costed plan to help them move towards the integrated, high data-quality, student-centric future to which they aspire.