

HOW PACE CREATED AN INTEGRATION ROADMAP TO ENABLE CONNECTED STUDENT AND AI CAPABILITIES AT UNIVERSITY OF SUNDERLAND



UNIVERSITY OF SUNDERLAND HIGHLIGHTS

5x

Quicker Mean Time to
Detection & Correction
speed

70+

Assessment items road
mapped

£100k

Cost risk mitigation through
update of code bases and
upgrades

BACKGROUND

The University of Sunderland is a public research university that serves a diverse study body of around 30,000 students globally. This can be within their home on the north case of England, in their London city campus or in Hong Kong.

The University finds itself in a very opportunistic time, where investment into the North has been getting large traction, both from private sector as well as government funding. Smart Cities and connected campus with

the local area itself are some key goals planned for the years to come, making integration and data a forefront consideration.

THE CHALLENGE

The University had a clear vision for its digital future, but limited visibility into its existing integrations created uncertainty around delivery. Issues were often discovered by business users rather than detected by IT, while developers could spend around two weeks investigating failures, identifying solutions and implementing fixes. This made everyday operations harder to support and increased the risks associated with future investment.

Much of the complexity came from legacy integration methods, limited documentation and inconsistent governance. Changes in personnel had also left gaps in institutional knowledge, making existing connections difficult to understand and maintain. Without addressing these weaknesses, planned AI, CRM and student lifecycle initiatives risked inheriting the same operational problems.

The University needed an independent assessment that would identify its integration risks, quantify their impact and provide a practical roadmap for improvement. Crucially, leadership needed evidence to prioritise investment with confidence rather than commit further resources without understanding the underlying risks.

WHAT WE DID

The University engaged Pace Integration to deliver an eight-week Integration and Data Assessment through Pace ISL (Integration Strategy Light). Pace was selected for its independent, platform-agnostic approach, specialist integration expertise and understanding of the UK higher education sector. The engagement was designed to give the University clear findings, practical recommendations and a prioritised roadmap within a defined timeframe.

A dedicated team of three worked closely with the University's technical, security, development and architecture teams. Pace adapted discovery sessions around stakeholder availability and combined interviews with direct inspection of existing systems to overcome documentation gaps. This kept the assessment moving while building a reliable picture of the University's integration landscape.

Integration Landscape Assessment:

Pace reviewed the integration estate and repositories, using Timetabling, Accommodation, Joiner-Mover-Leaver and Marketing as four representative service areas. The assessment identified 37 integration risks, including 23 critical risks, and analysed 43 process vulnerabilities. Each finding was assessed against its operational impact and potential remediation, giving the University a clearer understanding of its most pressing weaknesses.

Technical Roadmap and Operating Model:

Pace developed a seven-step technical roadmap covering security, monitoring, integration patterns and enterprise application integration. Alongside this, the team recommended improvements to governance, platform tooling, team structure and solution architecture. The recommendations focused on creating more resilient, maintainable and reusable integrations, reducing dependence on bespoke solutions and individual technical knowledge.

Executive Alignment and Strategic Advisory:

Pace presented its findings directly to the University's Executive Committee during an on-site workshop, translating technical risks into clear investment priorities. Further advisory sessions with the Director of Technical Services helped align the roadmap with the University's wider digital strategy. The engagement gave leadership an evidence-based plan, with documentation and technical asset improvements already underway.



PACE-IMS - INTEGRATION MANAGED SERVICE

Pace-IMS is a flexible subscription that provides a dedicated team to deliver your integration end to end. It scales easily, keeps costs predictable and removes handovers for faster, more reliable results.

RESULTS & OUTCOMES

In just 8 weeks, Pace identified 37 integration risks, including 23 critical risks, and analysed 43 process vulnerabilities across the University's integration estate. The assessment gave leadership a clearer understanding of existing weaknesses and a prioritised plan to address them before committing further investment.

The University now has a structured roadmap covering technical improvements, governance and future integration capabilities. Alongside these confirmed findings, Pace modelled the potential efficiency and cost benefits of implementing the recommended architecture, giving the Executive Committee a stronger basis for investment decisions.

The assessment identified the following outcomes and opportunities:

37 | 43

Systemic | Process Risks

Risks that the University needed to remedy strategically with new technology or operating model

60-80%

Faster Detection & Correction

Mean time to detection and resolution slashed through correct integration design and alerting error handling mechanism

4x ROI

Asset Reusability & Simplicity

Particularly in File Management, and the sharing of files to multiple systems as well as breaking down complexity by 4x

10 hours

Time saved per developer per week

In integration maintainability and fault diagnosis

Vendor Dependent

Costs saved for bespoke, single use integrations

Without their own internal capability, The University was at the mercy of product vendors creating non-reusable bespoke integrations, which did not scale with the organisations view of a connected university.

CONCLUSION

The University of Sunderland has moved from limited visibility and reactive integration management to a clear, prioritised plan for improvement. With the findings presented to its Executive Committee and initial documentation and technical asset work underway, the University can make more informed decisions about its next phase of digital investment.

The University now has a stronger foundation for connected student services, CRM modernisation and future AI capabilities.

TRANSFORM BUSINESS FROM MANUAL AND FRAGMENTED TO STREAMLINED AND READY TO SCALE.

Pace Integration connects your systems to accelerate growth. Our fully onshore UK team delivers integration strategy, engineering and support, eliminating manual handoffs, streamlining operations and improving customer experiences.

Contact us today to learn how we can tailor a solution to meet your organisation's unique needs.

LET'S TALK

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