

UNLOCKING £500K OF VALUE FOR GLOBAL BUSINESS SCHOOL THROUGH A 10 WEEK INTEGRATION STRATEGY



SAID BUSINESS SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

£324k

Revenue opportunity
from sponsorship and
corporate funding

>500h

Manual effort in file
transfers, excel exports,
data collection &
remediation

5x ROI

On reusable data assets
centred around Student 360

BACKGROUND

Saïd Business School (SBS), University of Oxford is consistently named as one of the global top educational institution. In the Times Higher Education rankings, University of Oxford maintains its top spot for the 11th year running, a testament to the strong reputation it has. That reputation has not just taken years, but centuries to build. As The University moves into the digital age, it understands that the methods of bygone years will need to be updated if it is to remain as the premier destination for worldwide educational talent.

Saïd Business School delivers higher, executive and degree education programmes. Like many education organisations, SBS relies on a growing mix of SaaS platforms to run admissions, programmes, careers, finance, learning and alumni engagement. However, the data and processes that connect those systems had become increasingly fragmented.

Pace worked with SBS to define a clear integration strategy and iPaaS vision: documenting the current landscape, identifying the highest-value use cases, and building an investment-ready roadmap and business case to move SBS from ad-hoc integrations to a scalable, governed integration capability.

THE CHALLENGE

Integration at SBS had grown organically. Point-to-point connections, out-of-the-box connectors, and manual exports held the estate together. The result was a landscape where data was duplicated or siloed, often kept locally in Excel or Word files, where business processes were tightly coupled to legacy systems that made modernisation risky, and where no team could assemble a reliable single view of the student across the lifecycle from Prospect through Applicant and Learner to Alumni.

A legacy Salesforce Cloud instance illustrated the pattern. It had been retained as a proxy between other systems, carrying ongoing licensing cost and no clear purpose beyond keeping data flowing. It was symptomatic of a wider issue: integration was as a byproduct of projects rather than by design.

SBS's structure added complexity. The Business School operates with its own decision-making authority within the wider University of Oxford, and services like Admissions and Careers span multiple programme types. The result was duplicated pain across teams and limited clarity on where to start.

What SBS needed was more than a list of integrations. The School needed a clear explanation of what was broken and why, a student-centric target state to align the organisation, prioritised use cases tied to business value rather than IT impact, and a defensible, quantified business case to support investment decisions at the University's Investment Review Board. And they needed an iPaaS vendor down-selection framework they could apply with confidence.

WHAT WE DID

Pace delivered a 10-week Integration Strategy engagement for Saïd Business School under its Pace ISL (Integration Strategy Light) service. The engagement produced the strategy, the quantified business case and the vendor selection framework SBS needed to take to the University's Investment Review Board, moving the School from ad-hoc integration toward a scalable, governed integration capability.

Pace documented the current integration landscape across SBS's SaaS estate, covering admissions, programmes, careers, finance, learning and alumni engagement, and the ad-hoc patterns connecting them, including a legacy Salesforce Cloud instance being used as an unnecessary proxy between systems. The assessment identified the duplicated data, siloed processes and tightly coupled dependencies that made modernisation risky and prevented the School from assembling a reliable single view of the student.

On that foundation, Pace built the strategy outputs: a student-centric target state covering the full lifecycle from Prospect through Applicant and Learner to Alumni, prioritised use cases linked to measurable business value, a roadmap and governance direction, an investment-ready business case quantified across TCO, risk, revenue and effort, and an iPaaS vendor down-selection framework to guide SBS's platform selection.

The engagement closed with the full strategy package delivered to the CIO and Head of Data & BI, ready to take to the Investment Review Board.

Scope:

- Integration landscape across the SaaS estate reviewed
- Student lifecycle target state defined
- Prioritised use cases linked to business value
- Investment-ready business case quantified across TCO, risk, revenue and effort
- iPaaS vendor down-selection framework delivered

Pace ISL (Integration Strategy Light) is a bespoke integration strategy engagement, scoped to the question the client needs answered. For Saïd Business School, that was a 10-week engagement producing the strategy, business case, roadmap and vendor framework needed to take an integration investment decision to the University's Investment Review Board.

Pace delivered the service with a three-person team of one Integration Consultant, one Architect, and one Delivery Lead, working closely with SBS's technical, data and functional teams across admissions, programmes, careers, finance, IT and executive leadership.

Delivery cadence

The 10-week programme ran in three phases:

- **Discovery, 3 weeks.** Stakeholder interviews across SBS's technical, data and functional teams. Approximately 15 to 20 stakeholders engaged across the SaaS estate and the student lifecycle.
- **Analysis, 4 weeks.** Current-state assessment, student-centric target state definition, use case prioritisation, business case quantification across TCO, risk, revenue and effort.
- **Business case and vendor framework, 3 weeks.** Investment-ready business case, roadmap, governance direction, iPaaS vendor down-selection framework, and executive alignment with the CIO and Head of Data & BI.

The engagement's biggest navigational risk was the autonomy question. Saïd Business School operates with its own decision-making authority within the wider University of Oxford, but the integration estate the strategy was shaping would need to work alongside wider University systems should future conversations warrant integration between School and University. Pace designed the strategy to serve SBS's immediate decision while leaving the door open to wider University integration without rework, a two-horizon approach that respected the School's autonomy and preserved the University's longer-term options.

What made Pace different

- **Platform agnostic stance.** Pace carries no vendor affiliations into assessment or vendor-selection work. The iPaaS framework was built around what SBS needed, not what any particular platform would sell them.
- **Business-case rigour.** Value quantified across TCO, risk, revenue and effort, not just IT impact so the investment case was defensible and tangible.
- **Executive-ready output.** The strategy was built to be taken to the Investment Review Board directly, with the CIO and Head of Data & BI as the owners who could carry it forward.
- **Navigating complex organisational structures.** The strategy was designed to serve both SBS's autonomy and the wider University's optional future integration, without rework.
- **UK Higher Education sector depth.** Pace brings sector-specific understanding of the application estate, the student lifecycle, the governance structures and the funding rhythms universities operate within.



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 10 weeks, Pace delivered Saïd Business School the integration strategy, quantified business case and vendor selection framework the CIO and Head of Data & BI needed to take to the University's Investment Review Board.

Since completion, the strategy has become the foundation for a wave of modernisation at SBS, spanning its SaaS estate, digital-first buildings, new websites and agentic AI use cases:

- **15–20 stakeholder interviews** across SBS's technical, data and functional teams, spanning admissions, programmes, careers, finance, IT and executive leadership
- **Current-state integration landscape review** across the SaaS estate (admissions, programmes, careers, finance, learning, alumni engagement)
- **Student-centric target state** covering the full lifecycle from Prospect through Applicant and Learner to Alumni
- **Prioritised use cases** linked to measurable business value, not just IT impact
- **Roadmap and governance direction** for moving from ad-hoc integrations to a scalable, governed integration capability
- **Investment-ready business case** quantified across TCO, risk, revenue and effort (see table below)
- **iPaaS vendor down-selection framework** to guide SBS's platform selection
- **Executive alignment** with the CIO and Head of Data & BI, with the full strategy pack ready for the University's Investment Review Board

£35k

TCO Reduction

Through careful design and landscape simplification

£324k

Sponsorship and Funding

Through engaging in alumni and corporate relations

£200k

Risk Mitigation measures

Reduction in security risks and management of data

10+

Reusable Assets Scoped

Designed in just phase 1

Strategic Foundation

Integration as an enabler, not a project requirement

This was the first time, with executive buy in that integration was being considered as a new stream generator rather than a code element

CONCLUSION

Saïd Business School now has an investment-ready case for integration, a quantified business case, a prioritised roadmap, a governance direction, and a vendor framework, ready to take to the University's Investment Review Board.

More significantly, the strategy has already begun to catalyse change. Since the engagement, SBS has progressed its SaaS estate (including changes to its Salesforce products), implemented digital-first buildings, deployed new websites, and begun building a set of agentic and AI use cases on the integration landscape the strategy mapped out. What began as a 10-week assessment has become the foundation for a wave of modernisation at SBS.

For a world-leading business school committing to a step-change in how it operates digitally, Pace's work has given leadership the clarity to invest with evidence and the integration foundation to build on.

This engagement draws on Pace's broader work on the Student 360 model, a unified approach to aggregating student data across the full lifecycle, from Prospect to Alumni, that gives Higher Education institutions a single view of the student across every system they touch. To read about Pace's approach to Student 360, see the whitepaper, or get in touch at connect@paceintegration.com.

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

connect@paceintegration.com