



I wish every project we do, and every partner that the University uses, could be as straightforward as this...



It took just 45 days for the JS Group to establish a more efficient and innovative way of paying out funds to 23,000 students across Christ Church Canterbury University – transforming payments that used to take several days into instant transactions.

“I wish every project we do, and every partner that the University uses, could be as straightforward as this,” says Marie Dyball, CCCU’s Payments Manager. “We wanted this in place for the start of the new academic year so we had to work hard, but the JS Group was so effective and so professional in their planning and support that it made life so easy for us.”

The JS Group’s Aspire Cash service is now used by CCCU to make almost all student payments – covering bursaries, scholarships, hardship payments, prize funds, travel expenses, compensation payouts, food vouchers, and a long list of other support funding streams.

Aspire Cash was first spotted by **CCCU’s Director of Finance, Steve Mattingley**, at a BUFDG conference on opening banking – and he was so impressed by the potential of Aspire Cash (as experienced by finance teams in other universities) that he immediately instigated the commissioning of the JS Group as a transformative partner.

“I just wanted to get on with it,” he says. “At first sight it came across as impressive and it has absolutely delivered on this promise.

It is the right solution at the right time. At the moment we came across the JS Group, we were already having lots of conversations about how we were paying our students, the challenges of our payment processes, and the time delays in capturing information from students to enable payment set up.

This solution just seemed like it may resolve many of those things and actually it felt like it would be a good news story for the University.”

Matthew Bax, Finance Systems Specialist at CCCU, says that the previous payment methods were fraught with difficulties and became overly complex, especially when it came to integrating with the University’s finance and student record systems.

“Our previous records system (two years ago) meant we had a lot of manual re-keying of finance information about students. With the new records system (introduced a year ago) we were able to create technical interfaces to import finance data about a student. However, this still caused us lots of issues as students didn’t necessarily supply the right banking information that we needed or there were validation problems.

“It was taking too much time and attention to get right. It was increasing our workload and when we had other issues, we were also getting far too many student queries coming through.”

The Aspire Cash system sits independently of the student records system and requires no formal integration across the University’s various technologies.

It has been created totally with the student user in mind and avoids complex banking data issues.

TO FIND OUT MORE

Please visit www.jsgroup.co.uk or contact **David Marshall** – david.marshall@jsgroup.co.uk

It is the right solution at the right time!



Canterbury
Christ Church
University



"It's very different," says Matthew. "We were a bit taken aback at the start and I think we perhaps weren't used to such simplicity. We even started to over-think things and perhaps create more complexities but with the JS Group's help we soon became more relaxed."

Marie Dyball adds:

"Our Student Services team was so re-assured by the simplicity and the ease of approach that they were just happy to trust us to get on with it."

The University has adopted 'CCCU Aspire' as its student-facing badge for the service. The JS Group has worked alongside the University to create an Aspire portal through which students can draw their cash funding, benefit from specially-created expert guidance about student life and learning effectiveness, and access valuable careers information and insight.

"I find the JS Group team to be excellent to work with in every way," says Marie. "Very approachable, knowledgeable. They can't do enough for us. I can't think of a smoother project and a smoother partnership."

"From a university-wide perspective," adds Steve, "it's ultimately meant that those students who are in significant hardship, can receive payments in a timelier way, and it's enabled us to respond to the needs of individual students much quicker. I am certainly grateful for that, because that's always a challenge for any university in terms of our moral obligation to be supporting students, particularly when sector processes can sometimes get in the way of that support."

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