BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

IRON MOUNTAIN®

Case study

Birmingham City University enables agile working, preservation of historic records and smooth auditing for research projects

Transformed campus accommodation with slicker admin and better risk management.

Immovable deadline

With around 31,000 students from 100 countries, Birmingham City University (BCU) is a bustling and diverse place to study. Major investment in its estates and facilities lies at the heart of creating a campus fit for the future.

Since 2011, the University has moved teaching and learning from its Perry Barr base to sites across Birmingham - this includes the City Centre and City South campuses in Eastside and Edgbaston respectively.

"A recent project involved converting old microfiche files that were extremely delicate and in danger of perishing. Now, those records are preserved for posterity."

Claire Parker, Records Manager, Birmingham City University

Industry

Higher Education

Challenge

The University was looking to urgently relocate its substantial archive while improving information governance.

Solution

Iron Mountain® secure offsite document storage and scanning, delivered as a fully managed service, with the Iron Mountain Connect™ portal for easy file tracking and retrieval.

Value

> Real estate freed up for redevelopment and teaching purposes

> Less time spent searching for and retrieving files

> Easier to prioritise document retention, digitisation and destruction

> Clear audit process for funded research projects

> Fragile records preserved for posterity

Reconciling retention and destruction

Ensuring a smooth relocation meant finding a dependable partner to rehouse the University's substantial archives. Formed from five individual colleges, two of which date back to the 1800s, BCU was determined to preserve its rich history, while maintaining an effective record management and destruction policy.

For example, BCU might be contacted by a historian or family member to confirm which subjects an ex-student took. Similarly, it could be an auditor looking into EU-funded research projects which must adhere to strict rules, or the HR department seeking call transcripts or files to satisfy requirements for students travelling abroad as part of their courses.

"We get lots of different enquiries," said Records Manager, Claire Parker. "The trick is knowing which documents you need to hold on to and for how long, to keep storage costs as low as possible."

On-demand digitisation

BCU relocated its archive to a nearby highly-secure Iron Mountain® storage facility in just three weeks. The initial transition involved around 6,000 boxes, all carefully collected, logged, and given individual barcodes for tracking.

The solution includes Iron Mountain Connect™ for easy file retrieval. "The portal is very user-friendly and great for quickly searching and pulling up reports," added Parker. "For example, we can see when files reach the end of their legal retention period and ask for them to be securely destroyed for surer risk management."

Iron Mountain specialists are also supporting the University's move to online records and have produced over 875,000 images. They prepare, scan, quality assure, and index all digital records.

"Our departments can engage and work directly with Iron Mountain," said Parker. "A recent project involved converting old microfiche files that were extremely delicate and in danger of perishing. Now, those records are preserved for posterity."

Greater visibility and control

The combination of off-site storage and on-demand scanning is proving to be a great enabler for agile working as the University continues to grow. "With increasing student numbers we're going to need more libraries and teaching spaces," added Parker. "Having Iron Mountain on hand to help release areas taken up by filing is an immense help."

Other benefits include less time spent searching for documents, resulting in faster retrieval and a better experience for information requestors. A good case in point is the EU research project audit process, which runs smoothly and efficiently.

"We now have a much clearer picture of our total archive at a department level," said Parker. "So, it's easier to decide which documents are most important and more frequently referred to. And set priorities when it comes to retention, scanning and destruction."

One such priority is a forthcoming project to digitise fragile student paper records from the 1940s before they become unreadable. "We enjoy a close relationship and have always found Iron Mountain to be very responsive, often assisting with office moves at short notice," concluded Parker.

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Claire Parker, Records Manager, Birmingham City University

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About Iron Mountain

Iron Mountain Incorporated (NYSE: IRM), founded in 1951, is the global leader for storage and information management services. Trusted by more than 220,000 organizations around the world, and with a real estate network of more than 85 million square feet across more than 1,400 facilities in over 50 countries, Iron Mountain stores and protects billions of information assets, including critical business information, highly sensitive data, and cultural and historical artifacts. Providing solutions that include secure storage, information management, digital transformation, secure destruction, as well as data centers, art storage and logistics, and cloud services, Iron Mountain helps organizations to lower cost and risk, comply with regulations, recover from disaster, and enable a more digital way of working. Visit www.ironmountain.com for more information.