



INDUSTRY

Public Sector

CHALLENGE

Lack of storage space for student loan applications forced rethink of long-term storage arrangements

SOLUTION

Consolidation and off-site storage of confidential paper records featuring the Iron Mountain Connect™ online portal with secure information destruction

VALUE

- More resilient and secure records management process
- Faster document retrieval and access to information
- Cost-neutral project offset against space, productivity and cost savings

CASE STUDY STUDENT LOANS COMPANY

IMPROVING BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND DATA SECURITY

MULTIPLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Student Loans Company (SLC) is a non-profit government-owned organisation set up to provide loans and grants to student in universities and colleges in the UK. Rapid growth in recent years, particularly since the increase in tuition fees, has seen the number of staff at its Darlington site more than double, with the organisation operating a three-shift programme so that applications are processed 24 hours a day.

Each loan, bursary, or grant application generates a wealth of paper documents. Each signed form needs to be supported by sensitive documentation to prove identity and residency, such as a copy of a passport, driving licence, or birth certificate. Additional paperwork, like credit search results, is also generated.

SECOND-TO-NONE PROCESSES AND SECURITY

With millions of new applicants and customers with loans outstanding, the SLC must store highly confidential files for up to 25 years. Running out of space, it needed a new storage arrangement.

Kerr Clarkson, Facilities Operations Manager at the Student Loans Company, says: "If we were to use an external storage vendor, we had to be sure that fast and easy access to documents would be maintained and that storage facilities could meet the high levels of security required."

After fully evaluating the responses to tender, the SLC chose Iron Mountain®. Kerr Clarkson explains why: "Our experience of working with Iron Mountain previously had been very positive. A site visit demonstrated their processes and security arrangements were second-to-none, and their proposal was the most cost effective."

FLAWLESS MIGRATION

To minimise costs, the company set a retention policy of six months for the most recent applications and moved the remainder into secure storage with Iron Mountain. In total, over 50,000 boxes of documents were located, indexed, and moved in just over four weeks.

Iron Mountain provided a dedicated team. Documents were collected, barcoded, and cross-referenced. Details were then entered onto the Iron Mountain Connect™ portal - the Iron Mountain web-based records management system - and the right retention dates added. If any boxes appeared damaged, the documents were re-boxed and re-labelled to preserve their integrity.

"The whole project went very smoothly, and we didn't lose a single box," confirms Kerr. "We had a very clear process and the upfront planning and preparation really paid dividends. Iron Mountain are great to work with and we couldn't have done it so effectively without them. What's more, the project came in under budget."

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Kerr Clarkson
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Student Loans Company

REDUCED RISK WITH PRODUCTIVITY AND SPACE SAVINGS

The SLC now has a fully scalable records management solution capable of supporting its business for the foreseeable future. Consolidating paper-based records off site with Iron Mountain has also freed up significant space and largely relieved SLC staff of the burden of archive management.

“By storing our records with Iron Mountain we've massively reduced risk,” says Kerr. “Retrieval is much easier. The Iron Mountain Connect portal is fast, easy to use, and very effective - you just type in a box number and it turns up on site the next day.”

EXTRA FINANCIAL BENEFITS

The cost of Iron Mountain off-site storage was offset against warehouse rental and other internal cost savings, meaning that the project was largely cost neutral. The company also benefited from higher volume discounts on other storage facilities as a result of the bulk transfer project.

Each month Iron Mountain collects and takes into store any records older than six months. This typically amounts to around 1,000 boxes. Files reaching their destruction date are flagged and, after SLC authorisation, securely destroyed.

As well as off-site records management and secure destruction of unwanted documents, Iron Mountain also provides data protection services. This involves a daily collection of back-up tapes from three data centres: two in Darlington and the other in Glasgow. In the event of data loss, back-up tapes can be delivered to any UK location 24/7 to enable systems to be restored.

Kerr sums up: “We've now got a far more efficient and resilient process for the safekeeping of confidential files. Iron Mountain has a strong customer service ethic - always helpful, attentive and efficient. If there's ever a problem I know they will sort it out and come back with an answer right away.”

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ABOUT IRON MOUNTAIN

Iron Mountain operates in major markets worldwide, serving thousands of customers throughout the UK, Europe, US, Canada, Asia Pacific and Latin America. For more information, visit our website at www.ironmountain.co.uk or at www.ironmountain.ie

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