

Audit made simple with SpirALS

A Learning Support Manager using SpirALS and TEAM informed us of a recent audit and pointed out a request relating to in-year changes to cost items such as staff rates.

As the data requests made during the audit would be of interest and value to our users, we asked if she would be willing to share her experience. We are grateful to the manager concerned for sharing this information which we believe will be of benefit even if a college is not subject to an external audit.

Confident Preparation with *SpirALS* and *TEAM*:

“A combination of total trust in and comprehensive use of our systems has always guaranteed this college a stress-free audit, self-assessment and inspection experience.”

This Learning Support Manager already knew that the evidence in *SpirALS and TEAM* was accurate, up-to-date and this would be confirmed when cross-referenced with the college MIS system, HR and paper records (i.e. triangulated).

The Manager did not need to prepare *anything* in advance as she is rigorous in recording all support items for *all* students, low and high cost. She utilises the **Student Details Manager** to the full, ticks all the boxes in **Assessment & Screening tab**, **Support Records**, adds **Evidence & Assessment notes** with dates, reviews and logs.

The Audit Criteria:

The auditor chose 7 students:

- 6 Low Cost (under £5,500) aged 16-18
- 1 High Cost aged 19+

All students selected were on different courses, at different levels with the common factor being **college-wide attendance falling below the minimum percentage for the college.**

For this **TEAM** proved invaluable.

Evidence of Attendance, Session Plans and Records of Work:

The auditor wanted to see **attendance in support**, cross referenced with college attendance records and see **evidence of reasons for non- attendance and consequential intervention actions.**

He hand-picked specific support sessions on specific dates with attendance information (present, authorised/ unauthorised absence), content of the session, record of work and attendance over the entire support programme reviews, logs and student self-assessment.

He also wanted to see how the **data had been recorded by the LSA's** and the Manager simply logged in to **TEAM** as the LSA and showed him the web interface.

Reports requested:

- **Summary of ALS costs**
- **Summary of ALS costs by tiers**
- **ILR values pasted into MS Excel**

Evidence of Responsiveness:

The learning support department at this college ensure that support is in place within 1 week of starting at the college for 20% of students and guarantee that support is in place within 10 days for *all* students. All evidence requested confirmed this had taken place.

Reports requested:

- **Responsiveness (referral & assessment to support start)**

Evidence of Changes to Rates:

Using Dyslexia Tutor rates as examples, the auditor requested detail of **cost item rate increases**, such as when the rate changed in-year and a rationale for the change.

The rate changes were cross-referenced with HR and invoices. He wanted recorded evidence of cost increases for comparison year on year.

The screenshot shows a web form with the following fields and values:

- Staff Type / Rate / Equipment Name: Learning Support Practitioner Rate 2
- Type of Rate or Item Amount: Normal Hourly Rate or One-Off Amount
- Non-Weekly / Equipment Rate (One Off): [checkbox]
- Notes / Description: Rate change on the 4th November 2013 due to salary increase.
- Hourly Rate (£ / Hr): £18.00
- Hourly Rate / Item Amount for Learning Support Practitioner Rate 2: £18.00

Tip: When a rate changes, we suggest that a second rate is created with the same name – e.g. LSP Rate 1, LSP Rate 2 etc. Add the date of change and notes in the 'Notes/Description field' on the Staff Types and Hourly Rates form. We can see the value in this for budgeting and claims evidence purposes.

This Learning Support Manager had everything requested available at the touch of a button and going forward can produce audit trails of rate changes.

Have you had any audit or inspection experiences/requests that other Midas users might benefit from?

If so, please email **Kate Coleman**: kate@midas-systems.co.uk