



BPM for Research Excellence

Ultimus Case Study

- **Application** Process
- **Grant** Round Process
- **Security** and automatic updates of all data
- **Significant** elimination of human errors
- **Integration** and synchronization of processes
- **Higher** transparency and control over applications
- **Significant** reduction of cycle times
- **Reporting** and monitoring for organizational efficiency and control

Biological and Biotechnological Research Council (BBSRC)



Process Description & Background/Need

Biological and Biotechnological Research Council (BBSRC), the UK's principal public funder of basic bioscience research, has deployed the Ultimus BPM Suite to automate its core processes – the evaluation and allocation of grants for educational and research excellence. By leveraging Ultimus, BBSRC has been able to increase the frequency of its grant application rounds and to allocate funds to research scientists more efficiently.

BBSRC, a non-departmental public body, supports research and research training in universities and research institutes throughout the UK and invests approximately £336 million per annum in some of the most exciting areas of contemporary science, including genomics, stem cell biology and bionanotechnology. The traditional way of conducting grant application processes at BBSRC was through paper forms, which caused lost time while forms moved from desk to desk. BBSRC needed an automated BPM system that could handle grant application processes – which involve numerous administrative and evaluative tasks – more efficiently. Ultimus was chosen to manage the complexities of the grant application processes because of its proven capacity to handle far more than the required 6000 applications within a 12 month period. The core processes to be automated are two integrated ones: the Application Process and the Grant Round Process.

Application Process & Grant Round Process - Points of Pain Addressed

- The move from two to four grant applications intake rounds each year has made it impossible to process all incoming applications (more than 6000 applications per year) without an efficient BPM system.
- Routing of paper-based applications to the appropriate program manager for quality assessment has become complex and time-consuming due to the high volume of incoming applications.
- Human errors in filling out the forms were a constant risk that could result in misrouting and errors in further processing.
- Reporting and monitoring of the application and evaluation processes to ensure efficient and timely handling of quality applications and funds allocation was difficult to handle.



Solution Overview

The Application Process handles the flow of the applications from receipt to further processing and evaluation with the help of the Ultimus BPM Suite. Incoming grant applications are downloaded from a cross council server into BBSRC's grants processing database (an Oracle database with ODBC access). The application then moves to an assigned member of the administration to check all administrative aspects of the application. After all administrative tasks are completed, Ultimus moves the application to an assigned program manager for quality evaluation which initiates the Grant Round process. Handling of specific business rules such as exception and escalation handling is also automated by Ultimus. This is crucial for certain applications which are

applied with specific exceptions or triggers alerts for specific time conditions. The Grant Round process further activates certain administrative steps such as booking of committee meetings, preparing of evaluation reports, etc.

Reporting and Monitoring

Essential to BBSRC's requirements was a powerful reporting tool allowing process participants to monitor the status of individual grant applications or workflow instances. All users are now able to monitor the progression of the processes they are involved in through the graphical process monitor interface provided by the Ultimus BPM Suite. The system automatically informs the employees when they have delayed incidents, which guarantees that processes are completed on time, which ultimately leads to a speedy allocation of funding to qualified grant applicants.

Moreover, with the powerful reporting and analysis tool of the Ultimus BPM Suite, management teams can now assess the efficiency of the processes and thereby ensure effective and systematic handling of this core BBSRC business process.

Business Advantages

Data Updates and Security

- As the Application and the Grant Round processes are integrated and synchronized, Ultimus ensures that all data are updated at any time within both processes.
- The security and transparency of the data is ensured through the synchronization capability of Ultimus with the BBSRC database.

Increase in Efficiency & Elimination of Errors

- Secured automation results in higher operational quality and service which reflects positively on BBSRC's reputation among customers.
- The Ultimus-based processes are well-structured and can be optimized leading to improved process quality and business performance.

Operational Efficiency

- The abandonment of paper forms saves an enormous amount of time, eliminates human errors in filling out the forms, and accelerates the processing of the application.
- Employees are now able to work more efficiently, resulting in a faster and more accurate allocation of financial support for research excellence.

Improvement of Organizational Control

- With Ultimus' monitoring tool, processes have become more transparent to all process participants, allowing for more control over the processes.
- The Ultimus reporting capability allows for regular evaluations with respect to the efficiency of these core business processes, ultimately leading to continuous organizational process improvement and control.

Ultimus as Key System for the Future

Since Ultimus has made such a significant contribution to BBSRC's day to day business of efficiently evaluating and approving funding for scientific research, they are looking to expand the use of Ultimus to automate further processes. With Ultimus managing their core business processes, BBSRC greatly improved their organizational efficiency and effectiveness, which ultimately contributes to UK's scientific progress in the biosciences in general.

For more information on the Ultimus BPM Suite and how it can help your company become an agile enterprise, please visit www.ultimus.com.