

Student Management Systems – Features, Support & Functionality

IES x 3 users				
Strengths of the System	Weaknesses of the System	Tips for Users	Pitfalls	General Comment
<p>Features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Rich features and functionality Multifaceted package Accounting package is excellent <p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Product support and their ability to modify the system to meet the schools needs. <p>Functionality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ease of printing reports or other information 	<p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Not MOE accredited Requires an IT expert to install updates Requests to add anything takes months if ever to be actioned <p>Functionality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Features removed or lost with updates Unstable database Difficult to learn <p>Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to access training 	<p>Functionality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Keyboard shortcuts Demerit system now that the points show in the system 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of Changing to another system?? Two systems – one for student data base and the other an accounting package?? 	

PC Schools x 3 users				
Strengths of the System	Weaknesses of the System	Tips for Users	Pitfalls	General Comment
<p>Features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated system, which combines finances, administration, curriculum, timetable, library and Extra curricular <p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Good helpdesk – phone, Skype and email 3. Team viewer log enables them to connect, view and fix faults 4. <p>Functionality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. User friendly 	<p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No school visits for training – so far 2. Short staffed help desk 3. Time delay between Australia and NZ is not advantageous 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get training at the start of implementation 2. Don't implement all modules at the same time – limit the stress on individuals and the likelihood of mistakes as well as getting better 'buy in' from teaching staff 3. Emailing PDF files and invoices helpful and time saving 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continual updates of the system that don't identify which part of the system has been updated 2. Very poor website 3. The transfer to the scholastic side of the PC Schools went reasonably smoothly, however there were major problems when transferring the financial system over. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reports that were not accurate over some of the account codes b. Some net figures others GST inclusive depending on the type of payment made 4. Make sure your accounts are all on the same accounting system ie accrual or cash payments 5. Simple reporting systems are missing from PC Schools 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very good conferences 2. Ensure you have a very competent IT manager and staff who are open to change 3. Be aware that for six months to a year it is very challenging

Integris x 8 users				
Strengths of the System	Weaknesses of the System	Tips for Users	Pitfalls	General Comment
<p>Features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete student management system integrates student information with timetable, attendance, discipline, medical assessment and subject reports and NZQA NCEA data submission In general the system does offer a holistic tool for effective school wide student management System is stable and robust – has not failed 	<p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Product support poor Many of the modules untested when released. Some improvement recently. Product design happens overseas so terminology is not relevant to NZ situation eg discipline package uses 'suspension in a different context. ITAS has been slow to respond to requests for changes and improvements eg no spell check in the Reporting to Parents Module – still unresolved after 3 years Upgrades take a long time to be delivered and 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure your contract provides a high level of initial support when introducing Integris as a SMS. Once key staff understand the system it is very powerful and relatively user-friendly. Ensure staff have access at a user level appropriate to their role within the school - security must be monitored Good procedures need to be in place before commencing to use this system thus avoiding problems later Keep the number of people using the system who can make changes to the student database to a minimum eg 1 or 2 to avoid errors in inputting Ensure you receive adequate training 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A major time investment is required with the initial introduction of this system. New terminology eg classes are called 'teaching sets' in the timetable etc. Ensure ITAS provide appropriate support! They are under resourced in this area and the skill level of people manning the help-desk is questionable at times! Timetable is a module that has taken quite a long time to learn thoroughly. It is complex and full of unexpected surprises. Financial module only copes with basic procedures will not handle anything complex eg roll over credits etc. Does not have a holding module for students still on roll but 'stood down' and not attending. They really need to be off the timetable Help desk in Australia - charged for afternoon assistance No 'help' contents as in other software programmes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In general the system does offer a holistic tool for effective school wide student management

<p>Functionality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. It handles multi users eg attendance marking over whole school 4. Good links between modules to enable ease of use from one to another 5. Easier to set up user rights for all users 6. Good preset reports that all staff can use 7. User friendly eg fairly easy to find student information 	<p>not rolled out in a systematic way</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Not enough communication <p>Functionality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Issues with assessment – NZQA worksheets – Integris team has had to develop patches for errors that have been occurring. 7. Reporting to parents is time consuming and could be better – not currently using this module. 8. Billing module has a lot of inconsistencies and is being redeveloped. 9. Need to use double entry into accounts module 10. Behaviour module idiosyncrasies eg incident report cannot be ‘turned into’ a withdrawal 11. July 1st roll return a little frustrating that all the errors are not reported with first run. We did a ‘dummy run’ corrected errors then had more at the next run and still more at the final run 12. Reporting absence data – difficult 13. Searching for teacher timetables tedious 14. System ‘locks out’ frequently 			
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MUSAC x 27 users				
Strengths of the System	Weaknesses of the System	Tips for Users	Pitfalls	General Comment
<p>Features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capable of producing a large number of reports and letters x 3 2. Integrated which saves time - works in conjunction with CM Teachers, Absences, TTSM x 2 3. Stores a lot of information x 3 4. Flexibility <p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Great support from the help desk 6. Comprehensive systems manual 7. Flexible and easy to use <p>Functionality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Easy to learn the basics 9. Class lists –easy 10. Locating students easy and without a lot of information 11. Enrolments and Exits tasks are simple 12. Exporting data is simple x 2 13. Good filters 14. Easy access x 2 15. Good administrative 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's a MUSAC Programme 2. Responds poorly to multi users doing data entry <p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Support desk poor x 5 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lack of technical support and training for users <p>Functionality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. System crashes with large databases x 11 (at least once a day) 5. Not reliable 6. Unstable – automatically picks up other student's data and over types x 3 7. Not user friendly x 6 – too many processes to go through to get information 8. SLOW x 9 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I would be more interested in what people have had to say who have changed to another system recently <p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Badger MUSAC to come up with the answers 3. Ask other schools 4. Read the manual 5. Keep asking questions – if you think the system should be able to produce something it probably can if you know your way around <p>Functionality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Avoid system crashes by putting SMS MUSAC on a separate terminal server 7. System crashes or sluggishness can be avoided by using an option from the file menu – delete the temporary files 8. USE SOMETHING ELSE 9. Try and use all the 	<p>Pitfalls</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A session with all staff that use MUSAC to 'upskill' and all be on the right page at the same time – learning from each other. 2. Need a bad debt register 3. System crashes are sometimes a school network failure rather than a failure of the software 4. Does not 'cross over' with other MAC programmes - cannot do simple tasks – need to export into EXCEL

<p>tools eg mail merges into EXCEL or WORD</p> <p>16. Good links to other useful resources eg Ministry information</p> <p>17. Ministry returns are quick and easy to complete</p> <p>18. Efficient invoicing function</p>	<p>a. Slow to load</p> <p>b. Exporting slow</p> <p>c. Quick find is not QUICK - Difficult to access information when – student name, address other details are not the same as ‘care givers’ details.</p> <p>d. Takes approx 15 minutes to insert a new student x 3</p> <p>e. No ‘search engine’ – operator has to scroll through data</p> <p>9. Not compatible with ENROL</p> <p>10. Information on ‘leave’ is difficult</p> <p>11. Writing letters in SMS MUSAC more difficult than typing in WORD exporting and merging</p> <p>12. POP UP – instructions are confusing</p> <p>13. Throws up errors signals very frequently x 3</p> <p>14. Cannot copy data – have to enter twice</p> <p>15. Mail merge is useless x 3</p> <p>16. Manually inserting different fields rather than system being able to copy from one field to the next x 5</p> <p>17. Labels x 7 – never get what you want – a nightmare (especially the latest version)</p>	<p>programmes that are available</p> <p>10. Get A Lot of Training x 2</p> <p>11. QUICK FIND is good</p> <p>12. Data input must be consistent</p>	<p>effective</p> <p>4. Not possible to get a spreadsheet of option numbers without exporting to EXCEL and doing the calculations and then having to do it again every time there is a system update</p> <p>5. Cant get previous year information</p> <p>6. Not enough form letters that you can adapt to suit the needs of your school</p> <p>7. End of year procedures - many steps that are only used annually -</p>	
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KAMAR x 38 users				
Strengths of the System	Weaknesses of the System	Tips for Users	Pitfalls	General Comment
<p>Features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. KAMAR is the fastest growing student management system of any in the country and for good reason – it is brilliant 2. Integrated all in one system – personal, pastoral, academic, timetable 3. Faster than MUSAC 4. Record keeping and reporting easy and accurate <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ability to add notes 5. Stable programme 6. BoT election material excellent 7. Excellent for fees - ledger can be exported into another accounting system <p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Good help desk – x 4 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Quick and not too ‘techy’ 9. All information is under one application 10. Handbook 	<p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staff still not fully aware of functions b. Not adequate training with updates and processing changes 2. Help Desk - The difficult questions don't get a response 3. Updates change the way information is processed and printed 	<p>Product Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the help desk x 2 2. KAMAR is helpful with suggested enhancements to the programme 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.

<p>Functionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. User friendly x 16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A welcome change from MISAC 12. Teacher friendly x 2 13. Daily notices x 2 14. Timetabling programme user friendly 15. Synchronisation – report writing 16. All grades/attendance automatically brought forward 17. Wide variety of print options in the print area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Constant changes with updates <p>Functionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Slow to start up 5. Logs out all the time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Needs to another smaller (x) button so you don't exit out of it all the time x 4 b. Too easy to accidentally exit and slow to re-open c. Too many steps to go through x 5 6. No scrolling x 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cumbersome to enter list of details to individual students as it defaults back to the top of each student list each time and have to scroll down page by page 7. Viewing data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Can't double check your work as you cant have multiple screens open x 5 b. Can't go back a page if you want to review your work x 2 c. Frustrating not being able to view multiple screens 8. Financial still have to run two systems 9. Search features complex x 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Limited 	<p>Functionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Save reports as PDF files otherwise information will be lost x 2 4. Don't be too scared to play with the options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Play and play and play 5. Only one person should enter data – different ways of entering the same data generates another entry 6. Need 'techy' on site to assist with issues 7. Log out from Main Menu to stop automatic log out – if not used all the time – then type in user name and password 8. Using the message system under pastoral notes customising the area for specific information – year 12 participation and behaviour for when they move into year 13 and are nominated for prefects' positions etc 	<p>Functionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. KAMAR can do so much it seems impossible for all staff to be aware of its total capacity – this means so much more professional development is required for all staff using the system 2. The last person to go into a report will have their name on the top of the report – not necessarily the same person as the one who generated the original. – you don't know this until the report is printed 3. When administrators are working on progress reports uploading of different report layouts for test printing interferes with ALL mark books and therefore causes confusion to teaching staff who may be entering data for reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Is there a simple way of finding out if teachers have completed their reports 4. When students leave it does not show what 	
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	<p>search/reporting for staff data</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Formatting letters <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inflexible b. Fonts and type sizes could be a little more flexible x 4 c. Printing too small for some users d. Exporting data into WORD is the only way to get high quality documents e. Word processing needs to be improved 11. Not enough categories in the pastoral system 12. Records of achievement not straight forward 13. Timetable issues <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. No timetable rights for office staff b. Some classes not showing 14. List printing not as clear as other functions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Too many choices and complex b. Inefficient c. Attendance printouts limited (cannot search for number of 'lates' entered) d. Lists illogical – and not straight forward 15. No 'undo' key <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Have to start again 16. Report designs not presentable <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Slow to generate 		<p>year they were in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. When putting data into alumni you can't then retrieve all of the data 	
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	<p>some reports as it sorts whole school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">17. Testimonials – difficult??18. Display properties are hard on the eyes for high users19. Few shortcut keys			
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