

SMARTER HR AND PAY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Designed to cut complexity, improve
visibility and support success
across advanced education.





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INTRODUCTION

Higher education is undergoing profound change. Universities across the UK are navigating tightening budgets, fluctuating student numbers and pressure on overseas enrolment, all while facing rising costs and forecasts that more than half of institutions could be operating in deficit within the next year. At the same time, academic workforce structures are shifting, with teaching only roles increasing from 26% to 36% in under a decade, and research roles continuing to decline. Many institutions now rely heavily on hourly-paid, casual and sessional lecturers, creating additional complexity for HR and payroll teams already under pressure.

Staff burnout and pay erosion are also becoming defining challenges. Academics and professional services staff alike are managing heavier workloads with shrinking teams, driving higher turnover and increased operational strain. Meanwhile, regulatory expectations continue to grow, from OfS and HESA reporting to UKVI visa compliance and pension scheme requirements across USS, TPS and LGPS.

Legacy HR and payroll systems were not built for this environment. Multi-contract roles, grant-funded research positions, external examining duties and shifting timetables all create fragmented data, manual workarounds and end-of-month payroll pressure.

Zellis helps universities move beyond these constraints. With more than 60 years of payroll expertise and deep sector understanding, our real time payroll engine, AI enabled HR capabilities and integrated analytics bring clarity, accuracy and control. And with secure Azure hosting, Power BI integration and open architecture for system interoperability, we give teams the flexibility and insight to support their people and prepare for what's next.



Each school within the University sends us a spreadsheet with details of its casual staff, including variable hours tutors. All we have to do is upload each spreadsheet and check the data via a report. It's saved us a huge amount of time and effort.

Shona Donohoe
Payroll and Pensions Manager
University of St Andrews

WHY ZELLIS?

By combining always on pay, AI-enabled anomaly detection and real time insight, Zellis reduces admin, prevents errors and frees HR, payroll and finance teams to focus on activities that add value, not processes, even in the face of sector wide financial and operational pressures.

With our AI powered insights and always on engine, you get:

- **PAYROLL WITHOUT THE PRESSURE**
Whether colleagues hold multiple contracts, teach across departments or combine teaching, research and external duties, Zellis handles complexity with ease, with pay right first time in **99.9975%** of cases across all cycles.
- **SMARTER HR DESIGNED FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**
Built for the unique structures of universities – from faculties and departments to colleges, institutes and research centres – with onboarding, absence and contracts all in one place.
- **CONFIDENCE BUILT-IN**
Our anomaly detection identifies issues early, from missing hours and incorrect cost centre allocations to duplicate entries and National Minimum Wage risks.
- **TIME BACK FOR YOUR TEAMS**
Automate repetitive tasks and free HR, payroll and finance specialists to focus on staff wellbeing, workforce pressures and organisational priorities.
- **PAYSLIPS THAT EXPLAIN THEMSELVES**
Intelligent payslips explain deductions and changes in plain English, easing financial worries and cutting down queries to HR, payroll and business managers.
- **ONE CONNECTED SPACE FOR COLLEAGUES**
A secure mobile app provides instant access to payslips, updates, policies and personal details.
- **FIT FOR YOUR FUTURE**
Cloud hosted, AI enabled and fully scalable, supporting institutional mergers, restructuring and future proof HR and payroll operations.
- **COMPLIANCE MADE SIMPLER**
Support OfS expectations, HESA staff record accuracy, right to work requirements, DBS where required, UKVI tracking and pension scheme obligations with connected, auditable data.

THE FULL PLATFORM

The Zellis HR and Pay platform brings together five powerful elements shaped to support the complexities of higher education:



Real-time pay

Continuous payroll calculation with instant error flagging. Intelligent payslips improve clarity for staff across academic and professional services roles.



HR and people management

A single source of truth across departments, faculties and colleges. Track onboarding, performance, absence and multi contract roles, with built in workflows for governance, right to work compliance and institutional policy requirements.



Financial wellbeing

Earned wage access, savings tools and tailored financial guidance that's proven to support colleagues facing rising living costs and pay erosion.



Higher education integration

Zellis utilises an open architecture that enables integration with MIS/ student systems, timetabling, finance and identity platforms. Full support is provided for teaching only, teaching and research, researchers, visiting lecturers and casual staff, while compatibility with USS, TPS and LGPS pension schemes removes that headache.



Zellis Intelligence

Our connected data hub automates routine tasks, reduces manual verification and highlights risks in real time. Power BI integration gives universities richer workforce insight.

SMARTER HR FOR MODERN HIGHER EDUCATION

Put people, not paperwork, at the heart of your education establishment.

Universities thrive when colleagues feel supported, connected and recognised. Zellis gives teams the tools to create a consistent, joined up experience across a complex workforce.

Our next-generation HR platform brings together everything your organisation needs to attract, develop and retain great people, all while keeping regulatory burden and consistency under control.

One system. One source of truth. With Zellis, you gain a single, secure view of every person, no matter how many roles, contracts or cost centres they hold.

Track onboarding, performance, absence and role changes with full audit trails for HESA, OfS and internal governance requirements.

Empower staff at every level by making life simpler for everyone with self-service that empowers your staff. From payslips and policies to annual leave and performance goals, colleagues can access everything through a mobile-friendly experience that feels personal, intuitive and connected.



READY FOR CHANGE

As your higher education institution expands, merges or changes course to meet requirements, your HR platform should move with it.

Zellis is built on secure, cloud-based technology that is flexible by design, so that you can add new roles, contracts or processes without starting again.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF HR

By removing the manual admin that slows organisations down, Zellis gives your teams time back to do what matters most, supporting your people and your students.

Smarter HR means stronger outcomes. Because when your staff feel valued, your environment thrives.



Zellis has a positive way of dealing with our priorities and can identify what needs to be delivered and how to manage our main concerns. Having an account manager who we deal with on a regular basis means that they can find productive solutions to our complex situation.

John Keane,
Director of Human Resources,
St. Vincents University Hospital

COMPLIANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Compliance in higher education is broad, evolving and rigorous. Zellis helps you stay ahead by keeping data accurate, auditable and aligned.

Zellis automates the heavy lifting, flagging issues before they become risks and keeping your audit trail complete and ready for inspection.

We help your compliance data stay accurate, accessible and aligned across every department and function with:

- Right to work and visa compliance (including UKVI requirements)
- Right-to-work and DBS checks
- Safer recruitment workflows
- HESA staff record alignment
- OfS reporting needs
- Pension scheme obligations (USS, TPS, LGPS)
- Qualification, training and research role checks
- Absence and return-to-work tracking
- Automated reporting for governance



TURN YOUR DATA INTO MEANINGFUL INSIGHT.

- With real-time dashboards and built-in analytics, Zellis helps leaders see what's really happening across their organisation.

SPOT TRENDS, MANAGE WORKFORCE COSTS AND MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS QUICKLY WITH:

- Live visibility of absence and turnover data
- Instant access to HR and pay data
- Central dashboards for institution-wide reporting

SECURE BY DESIGN

Security and compliance are built into our technology, so you'll always be up to date with UK and Irish regulations. And with ISO 27001 and Cyber Essentials accreditations in place, we make sure sensitive data is safe and secure.

NEXT-GENERATION PAY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



Built for academic complexity

From teaching only roles to research funded posts, demonstrators, visiting academics, doctoral tutors and hourly paid lecturers, Zellis manages every scenario.



Payroll precision every time

Across higher education, accuracy matters. Every payslip, pension and allowance must be right the first time, not just for compliance, but for the confidence and wellbeing of your staff.

Zellis delivers payroll built for the complexity of higher education, combining automation, insight and control in one powerful platform.



Payroll that never stands still

Say goodbye to month-end panic. Zellis keeps payroll running continuously with our real-time calculation engine, so your team can review and resolve issues throughout the month. No more last-minute rushes or manual re-work: just predictable, precise, always-on pay.



Spot and fix errors before they happen

Our intelligent anomaly detection and live pay dashboard flag issues the moment they appear, from missing hours to teacher pension variances and duplicate records. With Zellis, you can act early, prevent costly fixes and maintain compliance across the institution.



Help staff understand their pay

Payslips shouldn't be confusing. Zellis provides intelligent payslips that explain changes and deductions in plain English, improving financial confidence and reducing queries to HR and finance teams. Employees can see overtime, tax updates and pay differences instantly through self-service on any device.



Designed to cope with complexity

From lecture-only and research contracts to split roles and short-term guest contracts, Zellis handles the full spectrum of higher education pay scenarios



Support the financial wellbeing of your staff

When staff feel financially secure, retention and engagement rise. Zellis includes a suite of tools to promote employee financial health:

- Earned Wage Access: Early access to earned pay, easing financial stress.
 - Personalised guidance: Tailored financial education and resources.
 - Money management tools: Budgeting, saving, and planning support.
 - Workforce insights: Analytics to identify and support colleagues who may need help.
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Smarter, faster, future-ready pay

Zellis combines AI, automation, and real-time insights to deliver a payroll experience that's transparent, efficient, and built for higher education. It's pay that works as hard as your people do.

MANAGED PAY SERVICES

With managed HR and pay services from Zellis, you gain time back for your HR and payroll teams, reduce internal overheads and headcount costs, cut operational risk and see that every colleague – from the lecture theatre to the canteen – is paid accurately, on time, every time.

Universities rely on a unique blend of staff including researchers, sessional lecturers, visiting academics, demonstrators, postdocs, and large professional services teams. Complexities that Zellis Pay handles with ease.

With 60+ years of pay expertise and Centres of Excellence in the UK and Ireland, our trusted pay experts will support you through every step of your journey.

Through our secure customer portal, you'll have:

- **Collaboration** – upload data securely and see it verified instantly.
- **Transparency** – track payroll status and checks in real time.
- **Reporting** – access intelligent reports, view a countdown to payroll close, and sign off with confidence.



To say that Zellis has changed everything seems like an understatement. We've moved from systems that were holding everybody back to a system that is driving everybody forward.

Ian Hodson

Rewards and Benefits Manager,
University of Lincoln



SOLVING THE CHALLENGES THAT MATTER MOST

Zellis is designed to take weight off your shoulders. It helps you see what's happening across your organisation, fix issues before they grow and give your people the clarity and confidence they need.



FINANCIAL PRESSURES AND BUDGET CONTROL

Real time dashboards help leaders understand workforce costs, forecast more accurately and manage pressures driven by declining student income and rising operating costs.



MULTI-ROLE PRECISION

Accurate payroll for colleagues with multiple roles, cost centres and research project allocations.



REPORTING COMPLEXITY

Power BI enabled analytics support detailed costing models, grant reporting and HESA obligations.



SUPPORTING WELLBEING

Financial wellbeing tools reduce stress, while streamlined HR processes give teams more time to support colleagues.



HESA reporting used to be a hugely time-consuming process. We had to pull data from multiple sources and build new spreadsheets to consolidate the info. Now, a HESA staff record report is quickly created, validated and output in an XML format that complies with HESA requirements. The HESA module also gives us a real-time view of HESA data at all times.

Shona Donohoe
Payroll and Pensions Manager
University of St Andrews



PREPARED FOR MERGERS AND COLLABORATION

Scalable cloud based architecture supports institutional mergers and shared services



SUPPORTING ESG GOALS

Every university is measured on its Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) commitments. Zellis helps you deliver across all three:

- **Environmental:** Digital payslips and paperless workflows reduce waste and cut carbon footprints.
 - **Social:** Transparent, accurate pay and financial wellbeing tools build fairness, trust and stronger support for staff.
 - **Governance:** Real-time data and clear reporting give leaders and governors the visibility to demonstrate compliance and make confident decisions
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YOUR IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY

Rolling out new HR and Pay systems in a university or other higher education environment is more than just digital transformation. It's about giving teams the confidence that everything will work from day one.



WORKING SIDE-BY-SIDE

From HR and payroll to IT, finance and academic leadership, everyone sees how the system takes shape.



HIGHER EDUCATION READY RESOURCES

Onboarding packs, templates and guides tailored for the sector help central teams and faculties adopt new processes smoothly.



BUILDING LASTING CONFIDENCE

Workshops, training and regular playback sessions accelerate capability and system ownership



FLEXIBLE BY DESIGN

Every higher education establishment is different, so here at Zellis we adapt the rollout to match your priorities. Pilot in a faculty, phase by college or institute, or tailor implementation around union engagement – whatever works best for you

Rolling out new HR and pay technology in higher education is more than digital change. It's about building confidence across faculties, departments and research institutes

FAST FACTS

 **4.6 M**

UK EMPLOYEES PAID MONTHLY

 **TRUSTED BY 60+**

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES CUSTOMERS

 **CIRCA 1 M**

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES PAID THROUGH OUR SOLUTIONS

 **1 IN 7**

EMPLOYEES ARE PAID OR REWARDED BY ZELLIS GROUPS

 **60+ YEARS**

OF HR AND PAYROLL EXPERIENCE

 **£17 BN**

PAID THROUGH ZELLIS MANAGED PAY SERVICES ANNUALLY



WHAT'S NEXT?

Zellis is flexible, scalable and easy to use.

Whether you're a higher education leader or responsible for HR and pay, experience first-hand how Zellis is helping to reduce admin, cut errors and support staff with confidence.

See what the future of HR and pay looks like for your organisation.

[BOOK A DEMO](#)

For further information please visit zellis.com

zellis.com

UNLIMIT
WHAT'S
NEXT 