

# Hong Kong Institute of Education Cuts Internal Support Response Time from Seven to Two Days



Hong Kong Institute of Education  
Tai Po, Hong Kong  
www.ied.edu

## Industry:

Education & Research

## Employees:

1,200

## Oracle Products & Services:

Oracle Advanced Customer Services  
Oracle Financials  
Oracle Human Resources  
Oracle Database  
Oracle Applications Server  
Oracle Internet Directory

*“Oracle Advanced Customer Services gives us a single mechanism through which we can tap the vast expertise available within the vendor without contacting several different people. With their support, our IT team has become more efficient, dynamic and responsive when dealing with requests from the business.” – Victor Cheng, Director of Information Technology Services, Hong Kong Institute of Education*

Established in 1994, the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) is a leading provider of teacher education in Hong Kong. Formed from the merger of five teacher training institutions, HKIEd runs undergraduate to doctorate courses for about 5,000 full-time equivalent students.

Today, more than 84% of Hong Kong primary school teachers and 30% of secondary school teachers are graduates of HKIEd or its predecessor colleges of education. The institution has also trained 80% of kindergarten teachers. HKIEd’s major campus is located in Tai Po, in Hong Kong’s north, and the organization also runs a town center site for part-time students.

HKIEd is diversifying its mix of courses to allow students to acquire nonteacher training credentials, such as an International Executive Master of Arts in Education Leadership and Change.

“We are expanding our programs to meet the needs not just of teachers, but other educators and people with an interest in the arts or liberal studies,” said Victor Cheng, director of information technology services, HKIEd.

Since its inception, HKIEd has largely based its information systems on Oracle technologies. These include Oracle E-Business Suite modules to manage human resources, payroll, and financials; Oracle Hyperion to enable management reporting; Oracle Database and Oracle Application Server to support and deliver critical applications; and Oracle Internet Directory to provide directory services.

**Key Benefits:**

- Cut 10 days from 30 to 40 days of technical support required for a 6- to 12-month project
- Reduced response time for internal customer requests from a week to two to three days
- Lowered time required for senior management's technical meetings by one to two days per month
- Reduced average number of outstanding calls to Oracle's support hotline by 50%

To help manage these information systems and their interfaces to achieve continuous operational improvement and quick return on investment, in 2007 HKIEd engaged Oracle Advanced Customer Services.

“Using Oracle Advanced Customer Services has enabled us to target our internal expertise more effectively, respond more quickly and with greater certainty to requests from business units, ensure expensive management time is allocated properly, and gain access to the vast pool of expertise that exists within Oracle,” said Cheng.

**Burgeoning Growth Fuels Demand**

An IT team with a staff of 60 supports an institution with an annual budget of more than US\$100 million and about 1,200 employees. HKIEd relies heavily on technology to meet its goals, with wireless and fiber networks connecting its primary campus and a large desktop computer deployment providing students with a modern learning environment.

All students must meet an IT competency requirement as part of their studies, as the institution wants to ensure its graduates are equipped to teach students who have grown up in the digital era.

When reviewing its future IT needs more than a decade ago, HKIEd opted to implement technologies that could support changes such as Web-based applications and employee self-service systems.

“We needed to install the best information systems and platforms that could support not just teaching and learning but also our internal operations,” said Cheng. “As a result, we became the first institution in Hong Kong to implement Oracle Financials to automate financials.”

Nine years later, HKIEd implemented other Oracle E-Business Suite modules to manage its human resources and payroll requirements. The organization is also using Oracle technologies to deliver its management reporting, database, application servers, and directory services.

This broad adoption of Oracle technologies and the growing complexity of its technology environment began to stretch the IT team's knowledge and prompted HKIEd to consider ways of supplementing its internal expertise.

“We have several critical systems and applications based on Oracle that we need to invest resources in, deliver in accordance with service level agreements, and ensure disaster recovery and information security,” said Cheng.

“While we had a very good technical team with individual specializations, not every team member had the knowledge required to support every system or interface in our environment.”

HKIED also wanted to ensure it was extracting the maximum benefit from its hardware and software resources. “We wanted someone to help us perform regular health checks to ensure our resources were meeting their utilization goals and giving us a good return on our investment,” said Cheng.

After considering ways it could leverage Oracle’s experience and resources, in 2007 HKIED engaged Oracle Advanced Customer Services to help support its information systems and infrastructure. Oracle Advanced Customer Services provides a single contact point for HKIED to access expert support resources at short notice, if necessary.

“Oracle is a big company with big teams,” said Cheng. “As a customer, we can always reach the expertise we need.”

In addition, Oracle Advanced Customer Services team members could transfer their skills and expertise in the vendor’s technologies to HKIED’s internal IT staff, building the institution’s own capabilities and knowledge.

### **Oracle Advanced Customer Services Lifts the Burden**

Engaging Oracle Advanced Customer Services has enabled HKIED to reduce the load on its IT team, with the Oracle staff performing crucial tasks such as assisting with server upgrades, development projects, and system health checks.

“This means we can undertake more planning and scheduling of projects required by senior management and deliver a higher level of service to our users,” said YK Cheung, information technology manager, information technology services, HKIED.

Prior to using Oracle Advanced Customer Services, the IT team sometimes had to spend a week in discussions with external support organizations, preparing tenders for work outside agreed parameters, obtaining quotes, and negotiating the price and availability of expert resources before being able to say yes or no to a request from the business.

“Now, if this is an area in which Oracle Advanced Customer Services is involved, this response time is down to two or three days,” said Victor Cheng. “We do not reply with a simple e-mail stating yes or no, either—we include a detailed capture of the implications of the request.”

This reduced response time also enables the HKIED IT team to meet some urgent business unit requests that it previously automatically had to refuse due to time constraints.

A measurement of the improvement to HKIED’s IT services is that the average number of outstanding calls to Oracle’s support hotline has been reduced by 50% since the Oracle Advanced Customer Services engagement commenced.

### **Technical Support and Project Planning Cut by 10 Days**

With HKIED’s IT arm split into three development teams and one systems integration team, each team leader has to work with a range of managers with differing levels of authority and requests of varying urgency.

“Sometimes you have to go through a lot of meetings and discussions about how to address the requirements from the various teams,” said Cheng. “Thanks to Oracle Advanced Customer Services, I can streamline the internal teams to ensure we make quick decisions on new projects or user requests.

“When it comes to the projects themselves, due to more efficient support, I can cut about 10 days from the 30 to 40 days of technical support and project planning required for a 6- to 12-month project. These overall savings include project managers’ and developers’ time.”

Taking on Oracle Advanced Customer Services has also allowed HKIED to achieve time savings in meetings and management decision-making as well as the development of technical solutions.

“As the head of the department, I had to cover a lot of areas, so my managers and I would find ourselves involved in technical meetings,” said Cheng. “That was something I wanted to avoid and now, with more focused support, I personally have been able to save one or two days per month. My managers are also able to save a few hours of their time each month.”

### Why Oracle?

In 2006, as HKIEd was developing its strategies to prepare for the internet and new models such as employee self-service, the institution evaluated the preparedness of Oracle to meet these challenges.

“At that time Oracle had an edge with very good roadmaps and blueprints for their products and services,” said Cheng. “For example, they not only had a very dominant database, but a strong view as to how this could be expanded into the internet world.”

As HKIEd expanded its implementation of Oracle products and services to touch on almost every aspect of its technology environment, it naturally turned to Oracle as its support requirements started to stretch the capabilities of its IT team.

“We engaged Oracle Advanced Customer Services in 2007 as a premium support package to deliver efficiencies and give our team a way of quickly improving their own skills in managing Oracle technologies,” said Cheng.

*The Hong Kong Institute of Education trains and accredits professional teachers. With an annual budget of US\$100 million, the institution supports 1,200 staff and about 7,000 full- and part-time students”*