



## Quick Stats

- ▶ **Inquiries and applications are up 10 percent since implementation, and can be attributed in part to reallocation of resources after purchase of EMT Answer**
- ▶ **3,000 questions asked each month**
- ▶ **Saves 15–20 hours each month for staff**
- 2,600 graduate students
- Recognized as one of the top universities in the north for academic reputation
- Eight colleges offer associate, bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees
- Mission: "To provide technology-based educational programs for personal and professional development."

## Challenge

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) is a nationally respected leader among universities and is known for its rich history of cooperative education programs. Although it is best recognized as a major technical university, RIT offers academic opportunities that extend to include liberal arts and humanity courses. With such a broad program, RIT, and more specifically the Graduate School, were receiving e-mail inquiries from prospective students that began to flood counselors' inboxes. Originally the e-mails were distributed to various counselors based on program or interest area; however the process brought its own challenges. First, the time between receipt of e-mail inquiries and response by staff was a problem, caused by the need for staff to research and respond personally to each question. In addition, consistency in message, style, and information in responses was an issue because each staff member would respond slightly differently to the same question. Not to mention, each staff member required approximately two hours to review and forward messages to the appropriate staff person, and an additional two hours daily to actually send responses. Staff at the Graduate School realized it needed a system that would allow them to focus energy on generating more inquiries rather than replying to routine questions.

"We needed a system that would provide immediate response to questions, allowing us to more effectively allocate resources to inquiry generation instead of inquiry response. In addition, we needed a tool that would help us to avoid people doing the same process, conducting research, and typing responses over and over again. Finally, we needed a product that would help us provide consistent responses and standardize our messages and information," Roch Whitman, senior associate director, Office of Part-time and Graduate Enrollment Services, said.

## Solution

After consultation with its IT department, RIT realized the value in outsourcing versus developing their own system to help with the e-mail inquiry issue it was dealing with. Hobsons was able to offer:

- Easy system to navigate and helpful training
- After developing and creating answers for their questions, implementation of the system itself only took about three to four business days

"Given current initiatives and resource allocation on campus, our ITS department could not provide the system and response that we needed as quickly and efficiently as an outside vendor could. We "interviewed" other providers, researched and viewed demonstrations of other products, and determined that EMT Answer best met our needs," Whitman said.

“As a result of EMT Answer, we will have real-time data and information that can help us better ‘push’ relevant information to students, providing us with a competitive position in the marketplace.

- Roch Whitman,  
Senior Associate Director, Office of Part-time  
and Graduate Enrollment Services

## Results

Since implementing EMT Answer, RIT has experienced multiple benefits:

- EMT Answer automatically responds to more than 3,000 questions each month, saving RIT’s staff approximately 15–20 hours each month of sending reply e-mails.
- Restructuring of support staff and have gone from four to three full-time support staff. Not all of this was a result of EMT Answer, but some of the staff resources that were saved could be reallocated to other responsibilities.
- Now have focused resources on calling applicants and accepted students as opposed to responding to routine questions.
- Inquiries and applications are up by an average of 10 percent each year since implementation, and a small percentage can be attributed to reallocation of resources that was in part due to EMT Answer.
- Staff have fewer e-mails to respond to, less duplication of efforts, and more personal contact with students, which is valuable.

“They have even used ‘canned responses’ to questions from EMT Answer to respond to individual e-mails and in online chats with students, as well. Overall, it has helped our staff become more productive and efficient,” Whitman said.

“Using EMT Answer, we will be able to continue standardizing the responses to questions students frequently ask. In addition, the data and reports provided by the system will help us track the kinds of questions students are asking,” Whitman said.

### About Hobsons

Headquartered in Cincinnati, OH, Hobsons supports education professionals in the preparation, recruitment, management, and advancement of students. With secondary school solutions, integrated marketing tools, enrollment management technology, and retention solutions, Hobsons provides innovative solutions that make it easy to help students make the best decisions throughout the entire education lifecycle.