

IRIS Central – Service Definition

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IRIS Central is a trust analytics platform that consolidates data from MIS, HR, finance, and other school systems into a single reporting environment. The platform enables multi-academy trust leaders to access real-time insights through role-based dashboards, supporting evidence-based decision-making across all schools from one secure interface.

The solution aggregates data from multiple sources and presents it through pre-built and customisable dashboards covering attendance, student demographics, staff information, financial performance, assessment outcomes, and wellbeing indicators. For trusts using IRIS Ed:gen MIS, Central also provides centralised management of school-level settings.

IRIS Central eliminates the manual effort of gathering data from multiple systems and compiling reports in spreadsheets. Trust leaders gain immediate access to consolidated, accurate information without waiting for data requests or scheduled reports. Role-based access ensures stakeholders see only the data relevant to their responsibilities.

The platform supports strategic oversight by enabling comparison across schools, identification of trends, and drill-down to individual pupil or staff records when context is needed. Baseline data allows trusts to benchmark performance against sector averages, informing improvement priorities.

Solution Functionality

Data Consolidation and Analytics

IRIS Central brings together data from across the trust into a unified analytics environment. The platform connects to MIS systems (with enhanced functionality for IRIS Ed:gen and iSAMS users), HR systems, and IRIS Financials to provide comprehensive visibility. Additional data sources can be imported and managed through the Central App, enabling trusts to incorporate datasets specific to their needs.

Pre-built dashboards cover the most common reporting requirements identified through collaboration with schools and trusts. These include student information dashboards showing on-roll and off-roll students, demographics, and missing data highlights across SEN, Pupil Premium, behaviour, and other key indicators. Attendance analytics provide trust-level aggregation with drill-through to individual student records, incorporating physical attendance, statistical analysis, and code breakdowns with flexible filtering options.

Register-focused dashboards track specific student cohorts including Pupil Premium, Special Educational Needs, Service Children, Looked After Children, and Free School Meals pupils. Each dashboard supports drill-down to individual pupil records where granular detail or action is required.

Financial and HR Insights

Financial information from IRIS Financials flows into Central, providing insights on income, expenditure, budgeting, and variance against plan. Staff expenditure analysis, budget tracking, and cross-referencing against HR and MIS data supports comprehensive workforce cost management. Invoice tracking at school and group level ensures transaction accuracy.

HR data can be sourced from the MIS or dedicated HR systems, delivering analytics around workforce demographics, staffing structure, absence patterns, and data completeness. This visibility supports workforce planning and helps identify gaps requiring attention.

Wellbeing and Safeguarding

The wellbeing module consolidates behaviour, safeguarding, and concern data into accessible dashboards. Trust and school leaders can quickly assess issues at any level, with filtering options enabling focus on specific groups, time periods, or concern types. Medical information dashboards provide oversight of student appointments, conditions, and medication records.

Assessment and Performance

Assessment analytics enable comparison of student performance and progress across the trust, including Key Stage 1 and 2 statutory assessments. GCSE results can be tracked against national statistics to benchmark school and trust performance. Admissions data supports occupancy planning, increasingly important as trusts take greater control of admissions processes.

Baseline and Benchmarking

Baseline data across attendance, assessment, behaviour, and other metrics enables trusts to measure performance against sector benchmarks. This contextual information supports target-setting and helps identify where intervention may have greatest impact.

Additional Data Sources

The platform increasingly incorporates external datasets including postcode data, weather information, and sector benchmarks. This contextual data enriches analysis and supports more informed interpretation of trust performance.

Custom Analytics

Designer Tool

The Designer tool enables users to create custom dashboards tailored to their specific requirements. With minimal training, users can build analytics that fit their schools' needs without requiring technical expertise or external support. Every field in connected systems is available for reporting, including budget data, actuals, commitments, purchase orders, supplier information, and any custom fields added to source systems.

Data can be combined freely across sources and time periods. Users can mix budget, actuals, and forecast in a single view, compare schools side-by-side, analyse trends across years, and drill from summary to detail. When requirements change, reports can be updated in minutes without support tickets or development queues.

Central Connect

For trusts requiring direct data access, Central Connect provides row-level access to all onboarded data. This enables internal analytics teams to work with cleansed, transformed data using their own tools and methodologies.

Ed:gen Settings Management

For trusts using IRIS Ed:gen MIS, Central provides centralised management of school-level settings. Administrators can configure and push settings across schools from a single interface, including reward and conduct types, custom fields, global lists, cover manager reasons, and wellbeing reference data. This eliminates repetitive configuration across individual school instances and ensures consistency.

Settings can be applied at trust level and pushed to all schools, or targeted to specific school groups where variations are required.

Real-World Service Operation



Implementation Approach

Central is designed for straightforward implementation with minimal disruption.

For Ed:gen MIS schools, setup is automatic. The implementation team links key users to the platform, and data flows begin immediately.

For schools using other MIS systems, setup remains simple. The installation team manages the entire process, requiring minimal input from school staff.

Implementation Process

Step 1: Welcome and Initial Setup. You receive a welcome email introducing your Project Coordinator and outlining next steps. We request the name and email of your designated Central administrator and confirmation of your identity provider (Microsoft or Google).

Step 2: Identity Provider Preparation. Microsoft users follow provided guidance to generate Tenant ID, Application (Client) ID, and Secret Value. Google users complete steps via Google OpenID Connect to obtain Application (Client) ID and Secret Value. Details are provided via your Asana project board.

Step 3: Project Board and Communication. An Asana project board is created for your implementation. All credentials and updates are added as comments to relevant tasks, maintaining clear communication throughout.

Step 4: Installation. Once setup details are confirmed, the team installs Central and configures connections to your data sources.

Step 5: Training and Resources. Access is provided to HelpHub, which includes courses on 'Getting Started with Central' and 'Designer', plus documentation to support full platform utilisation.

Step 6: Go Live. Central is available for use immediately after installation, with centralised data management and analytics ready for your schools.

Ongoing Support

A dedicated support helpline is available Monday to Friday, with 19 hours of telephone coverage daily. Online chat support operates between 08:00 and 16:00 Monday to Friday. Support tickets can be raised 24/7 using the support icon within the application.

All tickets are visible in the ticketing system alongside comprehensive product guidance and FAQs. The first-line team provides prompt support, prioritising query resolution and liaising with technical, product, and development teams where necessary.

All queries are logged in the ticketing system with real-time progress alerts. Documents, images, and videos can be attached to tickets to provide better context and expedite investigation. On resolution, customers are encouraged to provide feedback and ratings on their experience.

Data Security and Business Continuity

IRIS Central operates as a cloud-based platform with security measures aligned to UK data protection requirements. Role-based access controls ensure users access only data appropriate to their responsibilities. Authentication through established providers (Microsoft, Google, Auth0) leverages enterprise-grade security.

All data remains under trust control, with access permissions configurable at granular level. The platform maintains audit trails of user activity, supporting governance and compliance requirements.

Access and Security

Role-Based Access Control

Access is managed through configurable roles defined by the trust. Dashboards are allocated to roles, ensuring users see only relevant information. A user impersonation feature enables administrators to test dashboard access before rollout. Users are assigned to specific entities (schools, properties, locations) and can only access data belonging to those entities.

For certain user groups, trusts can restrict drill-down depth. Governors or trustees, for example, can be limited to summary views without access to individual-level data. This granular control ensures appropriate data governance while maintaining transparency at the right level.

Platform Security

Central supports common authentication providers including Microsoft and Google, with third-party options such as Auth0 available. Single sign-on via Office 365 or Google provides secure, convenient access without additional credentials.

EDUCATION

Product Integration Ecosystem

IRIS Education Family

IRIS Central is part of the broader IRIS Education portfolio, serving as the analytics and reporting layer across multiple systems. The platform connects to IRIS Financials for financial data, Every HR for workforce information, and IRIS Ed:gen for student and school data.

This integration enables comprehensive reporting that combines data from across the trust's operations. Finance teams can correlate staffing costs with HR data, school leaders can connect attendance patterns with wellbeing indicators, and trust executives can monitor performance across all dimensions from a single platform.

Third-Party Connectivity

While enhanced functionality is available for IRIS products, Central works with any MIS system. Data from non-IRIS sources can be imported and managed through the Central App, ensuring the platform accommodates existing system investments.

Service Differentiators

IRIS Central is designed specifically for multi-academy trusts and school groups, with functionality reflecting the operational realities of education governance. The platform combines breadth of data sources with depth of analysis, enabling both strategic oversight and operational detail from the same interface.

The combination of pre-built dashboards for common requirements and Designer for custom analytics balances immediate value with long-term flexibility. Trusts can begin using Central productively from day one while developing sophisticated custom reporting over time.

As part of the IRIS Education ecosystem, Central benefits from integration across HR, payroll, finance, and MIS functions. For organisations seeking simplification, IRIS offers the option of a single vendor across school management functions, reducing procurement complexity and providing consistent support experience.

Additional Information



IRIS provides mission-critical software and services for UK education organisations, offering integrated solutions across HR and people management, payroll and pensions, financial management and planning, and school management information systems. Further information is available at <https://www.iris.co.uk/education/>.

General enquiries can be directed through the IRIS website, sales enquiries through the IRIS Education sales team, and technical support for existing customers via the support icon within the application. Full terms and conditions are available at <https://www.iris.co.uk/general-terms-and-conditions/>.



IRIS Software Group Heathrow Approach 470
London Road Slough Berkshire SL3 8QY
Tel: 0344 815 5656 Email: sales@iris.co.uk Web: iris.co.uk

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