

Growing Without Growing Pains: 2U, Inc. on Scaling Payroll with OSV

The challenge: Scaling payroll without losing control

As 2U entered a period of growth through expanding organically and acquisitions, their payroll function needed to keep pace. The team wasn't looking to hand things off entirely. They wanted to protect their investment in Workday and keep payroll close to home while gaining the flexibility to scale resources on demand.

"We wanted to partner with a payroll provider that would allow us to continue to leverage 2U's investment in Workday while supplementing our resources on an on-demand basis," says Roehl Navarro, senior director of financial business process and systems at 2U.

After researching the market, the answer became clear. "We found that [OneSource Virtual] (OSV) specializes in partnering with companies that run payroll on Workday," Roehl notes. That Workday-native expertise made OSV a natural fit. Although finding a partner who could execute was valuable, 2U gained something even more significant: a strategic collaborator.



Overview



2U, Inc. is a global leader in education technology, partnering with top universities to build, deliver, and support more than 250 digital and in-person educational offerings — from graduate degrees and professional certificates to Trilogy-powered boot camps and GetSmarter short courses.

 **Headquarters**
Lanham, MD

 **Industry**
Education Technology

 **Employees**
2,400+

 **OSV customer since**
2018

Getting started: from optimization to full partnership

2U didn't dive headfirst into managed payroll. The relationship started with a payroll optimization project, giving both teams the chance to assess 2U's setup and identify areas for improvement. From there, 2U and OSV worked together to implement OSV's recommendations — and the partnership only grew further.

"We continued to collaborate with OSV to implement their recommendations from the optimization engagement and eventually extended our arrangement to include managed payroll, garnishments, and tax." Roehl explains. That deliberate approach built a foundation of trust before the real work began.

The implementation: a tight timeline, executed with ease

With 2U already live on Workday, the project focused entirely on standing up managed payroll, garnishment, and tax services. The team kicked off in February with a go-live target date of April 1 — a three-month window that left little room for error.

Lauri Andrews, senior manager of financial business process and systems, was candid about the early days. "We did have a rough kick-off meeting with OSV, which concerned us about hitting our April 1 go-live date. But OSV quickly course corrected and from there, the service enablement process went smoothly."



OSV's service readiness team presented a clear, structured timeline by identifying each task, who owned it, and when it was due. Weekly check-ins kept milestones on track.

"This process was effective because it allowed us to manage resources to hit our milestones and ultimately hit our target go-live date," Lauri says.

Configuration was quick and largely seamless. The team worked through the timing of transitioning away from 2U's previous payroll integration, ensuring OSV's setup could be fully tested in the sandbox before cutover. Testing went smoothly, and confidence was high.



Go-live: on time and on target

On April 5, 2U ran its first payroll through OSV. Everything went as planned.

"Our payroll team was happy with our on-time deployment," Lauri says simply.

Behind that outcome was the work of OSV's service readiness team, which Lauri credits directly. "The service readiness team provided the methodology and technical expertise, which made my life a lot easier. Without them, I would have been trying to juggle everything — but OSV really supported our transition to managed payroll."

Clear communication made all the difference. "We had clear expectations on roles and responsibilities, thus allowing us to collaborate effectively," she adds.

Focusing on what matters

With managed payroll, garnishments, and tax off 2U's plate and in OSV's hands, 2U's payroll team gained something harder to quantify — the bandwidth to think bigger.

"Partnering with OSV allowed 2U to maintain control over our payroll process and data, while being able to scale resources during our hyper-growth phase," Roehl says. "With OSV, our payroll team is able to focus on more strategic initiatives."

At the pace a company like 2U moves, that kind of focus is the difference between keeping up and getting ahead.