Case Study
International Admissions Transformation

As the largest University in South Australia, UniSA has set a high benchmark for student enrolments. However, when a new Director: International, Gabrielle Rolan came on board and a new strategy was developed, the leadership team had concerns about how the existing application management system would support the new strategy.

“Gabrielle knew we had to look at a new application management system in order to meet the University's international student enrolment targets,” said Aleicia Shekhar, Deputy Director of Systems and Operations at UniSA International. “Turn-around time for applications was slow, taking three to six weeks – and we weren’t reaching our desired conversion rates meaning we were unlikely to meet the required targets either.”

**Teamwork takes on the challenge**

The Vice Chancellor supported Gabrielle’s strategy and provided a project team to help implement a new application management system. The International Admissions Transformation Project included stakeholders from across the university, all impacted by international student admissions. “We wanted to ensure that everyone’s needs were met, discussed and budgeted for,” said Aleicia.

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Until this point, the University had several old systems in place that required staff to continually move between different processes and systems, this slowed down the application progress significantly.

The project team set out to find a system that could help streamline the process, reduce turn-around times and increase conversion. This system would also need to be:

- Quick and easy to implement
- Cost effective
- Familiar to established Agents
- Easily integrated into UniSA’s student management and pathway provider systems.

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It didn’t take long for the project team to assess their options, and come to a decision.

“StudyLink Connect was the clear winner,” said Aleicia.

“They offered a product that addressed each of our concerns.”

**HIGH-LEVEL SUPPORT TO EASE THE ROLLOUT PROCESS**

Working together with StudyLink, UniSA began the process of implementing their new admissions system. Aleicia was concerned the crossover period would be stressful – but turned out to be unwarranted. Implementation was surprisingly simple.

“There were no real problems throughout the process, StudyLink provided personalised guidance, training and assistance throughout scoping and implementation,” Aleicia said.

“There was even a StudyLink team member onsite to make sure everything went smoothly.”

When the scope shifted to include the Western Union Payment System, StudyLink also worked with UniSA to make sure the process was painless. “Although it added complexity to the project, it was definitely worthwhile,” Aleicia adds. Students can now make application payments seamlessly, as part of the online process.

**OUTSTANDING RESULTS IN RECORD TIME**

“StudyLink Connect has had a huge impact on international admissions,” says Aleicia, who alongside her team was awarded the Vice Chancellor Award for Professional Staff Excellence for their work on the project.

“All parts of the process are now done in the same system, where we check each application, assess them quickly and monitor each stage.”

In less than a year, StudyLink dramatically improved admissions outcomes. For UniSA, this means:

- No more incomplete or misplaced applications
- 48 hours to 2 weeks turnaround for applications
  - previously was up to 6 weeks
- Just 17 per cent of applications require data entry
  - previously 70 per cent
- Just 15 minutes to process applications and payments
- Offers can be promptly reissued
- A greater ability to collect and report on conversions
- Increased staff efficiency in general

But there have been other benefits, as Aleicia explains. “We can now successfully forecast student numbers to ensure we are appropriately resourced for the year ahead, plus we can lock down specific fields of information, such as academic records, to further understand individual student performance.”

With the future of international admissions at UniSA looking bright, they have plans to roll out new CRM and Pathway projects to continue improving the services offered. Alecia says, “having StudyLink Connect easily integrating with these projects will make the transition easier, and most importantly the student experience will continue to be a positive one.”

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