

Transforming University of Adelaide's admissions assessment – at speed

How StudyLink Connect helped the University of Adelaide become more responsive to market conditions and their agent network.

When the University of Adelaide (UoA) wanted to overhaul its international admissions process, one of the main levers it could pull was to bring application assessment in-house. Previously a third party assessed applications and provided UoA an offer recommendation that the uni then presented to prospective students.

That set up created a handful of challenges in the application process:

- **Turnaround times – one of the most crucial elements of the application experience for prospective students and agents – were heavily influenced by how quickly the third party assessed applications, which took things out of UoA's hands**
- **With little oversight over assessment decisions, UoA wasn't able to answer queries from agents – who submitted a majority of UoA's international applications and lacked end-to-end visibility over the process**
- **Less flexibility around entry requirements – UoA couldn't factor its own knowledge of student performance and the international educational landscape into the assessment.**

“We couldn't be responsive to the market and our agent network because we didn't have the right information available to us,” says Moira Laird, Senior Project Manager at UoA.

The outsourced assessment model also meant little integration with UoA's internal student management system – and no back-and-forth flow of data. The admissions team was forced to navigate clunky touchpoints throughout the application journey.

This led to keying in information three or four times across the journey, which could lead to data integrity issues and errors – not to mention taking time away from value-add activities such as marketing and other recruitment efforts.

“We wanted to tackle major issues we were having in three key areas – admissions, turnaround times and customer service,” says Tony Palatianos, Director of Admissions at UoA. “We needed a system that would allow us to not only see the entire process end-to-end, but run that entire process as well.”

“We also required something that fit our specific needs, which was building the best journey starting at enquiry and ending at matriculation.”

Ticking all the boxes

The answer was StudyLink. After an extensive three-month submission process, Moira and Tony say StudyLink's expertise in international admission management helped it stand out – as did software that integrated seamlessly with the UoA's internal systems for a free flow of data.

"I had worked with StudyLink before in a previous role, so I knew how well the student, agent and admissions portals interacted to build a more cohesive, transparent admissions environment," Tony says.

Leaning on StudyLink's knowledge of best practice and experience, UoA was able design a best practice admissions workflow – complete with the StudyLink Connect admissions platform and implementation of additional team members – that it unveiled in late March 2023.

Tony says the agent portal has made it easier for agents during the application submission process, as they don't have to log into a separate UoA portal. It's also unlocked more productive conversations with agents that allowed UoA to inform its market strategy.

"Now that both we and agents can see the status of applications – how many we have, where they're at in the process, what's missing – we can ask better questions and also get a bit more market intelligence about how prospective students are making their decisions."

Fast turnaround times lead to more applications

Since introducing StudyLink, UoA has seen increased efficiencies and reduced turnaround times from 30 days to 8-10 days.

Applications have also grown significantly. In just five months, they have received 12 months' worth of applications. And they're forecasting more.

And now with all application communications housed in StudyLink, the number of enquiries from agents have also dropped significantly.

"StudyLink has exceeded our expectations. We are more efficient, which allows us to better serve markets. And less manual data entry means fewer errors and more time to manage applications from start to finish, helping build trust with agents," says Tony.

"We and our agent partners have more clarity on the status of applications, allowing us to have more pointed conversations to get specific information on students."