

Chapter 7

Automated Enrollment in Higher Education in the UAE Universities

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ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has a far reaching impact on both organizations and individuals. ICT solutions are indispensable for schools, colleges, and organizations. Educational organizations are specifically interested in ICT solutions to support their primary teaching and learning functions as well as supporting functions such as human resources, logistics, finance, and accounting.

This chapter highlights the importance of admission and registration functions in higher education and discusses the main objectives and sought benefits from utilizing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications to support the automation of admission and registration processes and functions in UAE higher education's institutes. The chapter also suggests an effective approach to design and adopt such applications to ensure the realization of benefits to both students and universities. Of particular interest to this investigation is how can universities successfully and effectively apply the e-admission and e-registration system. The chapter concludes with a positive outlook of future Internet and e-applications to improve admission and registration in terms process streamlining, ease of use, easy access, and connectivity. It also points out some challenges that normally occur when some ICT solution is applied at a number of higher educational institutes.

INTRODUCTION

Today, admission and registration processes in most universities and higher educational institutes continue to be manually processed and using a variety of forms and applications and paperwork.

Only a small number of institutions have opted to use technology to partially automate admission and registration functions. Unfortunately, when ICT has provided many applications to support business applications and automate business processes, education had only small share of the

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-1984-5.ch007

technology application and have missed out on its benefits.

The potential gains that higher education can realize from automated admission registration system, justifies the need to design and implement a Computerized Automated Student Admission and Registration System. The need for such automated registration and admission system in today's universities will speed up the admission and registration process, attract national and international students, save lots of time and efforts that usually needed from both universities and students, give the higher educational institutes opportunity to grow rapidly locally and globally and compete effectively in education industry.

At Newcastle University in England "The decision was also made to decentralize the registration process so that the end users of the course data, the various University departments, would have more control over the accuracy of the data entered. It was also expected that the delay before the final data could be delivered back to the departments would be considerably reduced. Although the same registration forms were issued to students, available data concerning each student had already been entered in the system database. At the registration, using unique student number as a key, student data was retrieved from the database and updated as necessary" (Little M. C & et al, 1999).

The main objectives of this chapter are to review the following issues:

- To introduce the importance of automated admission and registration system in higher education.
- To explore how can universities apply the e-admission and e- registration system.
- To review the potential gains and the anticipated impact of applying automated system in higher education field on the universities and students.
- To endorse a paperless environment in conjunction with automating universities admission and registration.

- To highlight how automated system can be applied in education field and the benefits and need of applying it in today's universities.
- To explore ideas for future Internet and e-application and how they can be utilized to improve admission, registration and enrolment in UAE educational institutes.

BACKGROUND

A typical Arab university would have a dedicated office for admission and registration within the university campus, where new students are expected to report to in order to complete their admission and registration procedures. Normally, a new student would be asked to fill out an admission form and to have the completed form submitted with supporting legal and academic documents to the admission office. A current student would fill out a registration form for selected courses in the upcoming academic semester.

Likewise, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) all universities and colleges have physical or traditional admission and registration systems in addition to some partially automated systems like course registration, where current students have to login and electronically enroll in courses of interest, while some major admission process is still not fully automated.

Admission and Registration processes are extremely important to both students and universities. Universities can't create full admission records of new and current students without proper admission and registration system. Such a system is also essential and convenient to students because it provides them with a faster and less cumbersome procedure and easy to use tools to register and enroll in selected courses.

The scale and the persisting nature of students' admission and courses registration issues in many universities in the Middle East, warrant the need for a sophisticated and advanced automated sys-

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