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CASE STUDY – EDUCATION

Optimizing the Student Admissions Process for the University of Melbourne

28%
reduction in overall turnaround time

65%
reduction in turnaround time for Stage 2 of admissions

AU$ 150K
in initial cost savings

OVERVIEW

The University of Melbourne is the largest tertiary education institution in the country, featuring over 100 research centers and institutes. Ranked the highest in Australia, it is among the top 15 universities in the world (QS ranking 2024).

Client: University of Melbourne

Industry: Higher Education

Geography: Australia

Students: 50,000+

Staff: 10,000+

Challenges

The University of Melbourne was facing challenges related to the increase in student admission requests, with application volumes going up by over 50% for certain courses:

- **Lengthy Admissions Processing Times:** Due to the complexity and increased volume of applications, the university was experiencing delays in its admissions workflow. These delays led to student frustration, and in some cases, students accepted offers from other institutions due to late notifications.
- **Increasing Application Volumes:** The admissions team struggled to keep pace with a significant increase in application volumes (e.g. 56% increase for the Faculty of Science since 2017), which added further strain to the admissions process and required better allocation of staff resources.
- **Lack of Visibility into Process Bottlenecks:** Without a clear view of the admissions workflow, the university was unable to identify specific bottlenecks and rework points, resulting in inefficiencies and missed opportunities to streamline operations.

Solution

The University of Melbourne partnered with Apromore to apply process mining and gain critical insights into their admissions operations.

- **Comprehensive Process Mapping:** Apromore's process mining solution was implemented to analyze data from the university's StudentOne management system. This effort covered over 630,000 transactions and involved 17 million data points. By mapping each step of the admissions process, the university obtained a complete, data-driven view of the workflow.

- **Bottleneck and Variant Analysis:** Through Apromore's process mining technology, the team identified bottlenecks and inconsistencies within the admissions workflow. Specifically, the analysis highlighted the 20% of cases that deviated from the "happy path," indicating rework loops, errors, and withdrawals that affected process efficiency and student satisfaction.
- **Visualizing Performance for Improvement:** Apromore's visualizations allowed the university's Service Improvement team to engage admissions staff and stakeholders with clear, quantifiable data. This enabled evidence-based discussions on process refinements and provided a foundation for continuous improvement.

Results

By utilizing Apromore's process mining capabilities, the University of Melbourne achieved substantial improvements across its admissions process:

28% Reduction in Overall Turnaround Time

The insights from Apromore enabled the university to streamline workflows, leading to a 28% decrease in the time required to process applications. This reduction in turnaround time contributed to higher applicant satisfaction and improved conversion rates.

65% Reduction in Turnaround Time for Stage 2 of Admissions

In one critical phase of the admissions process, the university achieved a remarkable 65% decrease in processing time, allowing applications to move more quickly through the system and reducing the risk of losing prospective students to competitor institutions.

AU$ 150K in Initial Cost Savings

By reducing process inefficiencies and reallocating resources more effectively, the university saved an estimated AUD 150,000 during the initial project phase. This demonstrated the financial value of process mining as a strategic tool for operational efficiency.

AU$ 600K Estimated ROI

Based on the improvements achieved in the admissions process, the university projected an annual return on investment of more than AUD 600,000, underscoring the long-term value of data-driven process optimization.

Conclusion

Apromore's process mining solution provided the University of Melbourne with valuable insights into their admissions process, resulting in enhanced efficiency, cost savings, and improved applicant satisfaction. Key outcomes included increased transparency for identifying and resolving bottlenecks, significant financial benefits, and a smoother admissions experience with faster processing times. Following this success with the Faculty of Science, other university faculties were interested in similar initiatives, with plans to expand Apromore's predictive monitoring for real-time admissions oversight.