

# First Steps Towards Digital Transformation in Higher Ed Admissions





FULL FABRIC GUIDES

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## CHAPTER 1

# CURRENT AND EMERGING DIGITAL TRENDS IN ADMISSIONS

As students' needs and expectations shift, digital initiatives in higher education institutions are evolving to become more personalised and streamlined. There is a renewed focus on authenticity and an appetite for automation and data analysis.

Recent advancements in admissions technology mean universities are able to take a more strategic approach to admissions. Thanks to cloud-based admissions platforms, time that would have been spent managing and tracking paper application processes is being redeployed to other areas, such as candidate engagement and online events.

## Automation & Personalisation

Analytics functionalities that come with digital admissions platforms are also enabling HEIs to harness data and use predictive analytics to provide a personalised application journey and increase enrolments. In a world where online learning is growing and flexible modular and stackable programmes are being made more accessible, the ability to personalise and automate is critical.

In response to the pandemic, HEIs have adapted quickly to ever-changing restrictions and requirements, with some introducing delayed start dates and moving programmes online. A consistent line of digitally facilitated communication between HEIs and applicants helps to establish clarity and a sense of reassurance in these uncertain times.

## Artificial Intelligence

Increasingly, HEI admissions teams are embracing AI to save time and improve the applicant experience. AI-powered chatbots are being deployed to answer questions on a range of topics, from application queries to specific information about programmes.

Chatbots are becoming a familiar sight on HEI websites around the world and are being used in conjunction with other methods of communication. LiveChat can be an effective tool as long as it provides quality responses. And as the technology evolves, universities are able to programme more nuanced responses to queries. International applicants in different timezones can also benefit as they don't have to rely on office opening hours.



## Virtual admissions events

The majority of admissions teams are also 'going digital' when it comes to events. Pandemic or not, virtual admissions events can be hugely beneficial for applicants. In-person events are great and help individuals get a feel for the institution's culture and campus. However, universities can often provide a more personalised experience when they move admissions events online.

By taking events online, HEIs can segment events into different topics (subject, domestic/ international, and so on), allowing individuals to attend what's most relevant to them. Digital admissions platforms enable HEIs to send targeted event invitations and tailored content to ensure that applicants receive the most relevant information. In doing so, students have a digital record of the experience and can revisit videos later.

## CHAPTER 2

# WHY SHOULD ADMISSIONS TEAMS ADOPT A DIGITAL ADMISSIONS PLATFORM?

### What do we mean by an admissions platform?

Admissions platforms simplify and automate the entire admissions process for HEIs and other education providers. From managing prospective students' records to communicating with them through highly targeted marketing campaigns, admissions software is the hub through which *everything* happens.



### How can admissions software benefit your HEI?

#### 1. Digital costs are reduced

Implementing an admissions platform isn't as expensive or time consuming as you might think. As it's cloud-based, it doesn't involve a large infrastructural overhaul and you can host it with ease on your domains. What's more, a quality platform will integrate with your other IT collateral, enabling you to streamline processes, keep everything in one place and most importantly, increase ROI.

#### 2. Students' expectations are met

The Digital 2019 report by Hootsuite and We Are Social revealed that we spend on average six hours and 42 minutes online each day. Considering the impact that coronavirus is having on the way we communicate, that figure is probably higher today.

Applicants expect a user-friendly application experience. The application process should be segmented into manageable sections. Millennials and Gen Z don't want to have to navigate outdated application forms and they certainly don't want to have to deal with physical paperwork.

### **3. Personalisation is possible**

With an admissions platform, you can define the applicant lifecycle and monitor what stage each individual is at, from 'prospect' to 'submitted' and beyond.

Segmenting the application journey means individuals will see the content that is most relevant to their stage in the journey. For example, if an applicant has started an application but is yet to submit, a trigger can be set so that they receive an email reminder a few weeks before the deadline.

### **4. The process is simplified**

One of the purposes of technology is to make life easier, and that's exactly what admissions platforms do. As well as enabling you to define the application journey, it integrates with your CRM system so that your HEI can continue to track and engage with students in a personalised way. Institutions that rely on paper applications and spreadsheets are likely to experience a sense of amazement at how much easier digitalisation makes things!

### **5. Data leveraging can boost admissions**

By using an admissions platform, you'll get insights into where in the pipeline applicants are as well as data on how applicants engage with your content. For instance, once you've used your platform to publish a landing page for applications, you can track views and submissions in real time. This allows you to gain an understanding of what's working and what's not in order to make your content more engaging.

### **6. You'll gain access to IT expertise**

A cloud admissions platform is a third party software system. So when it comes to learning how to use, troubleshoot and upgrade it, you're supported by your vendor. This means you no longer have to worry about training admissions employees to use technology as it evolves as help is always at hand.

## CHAPTER 3

# CASE STUDIES - BEFORE VS AFTER DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

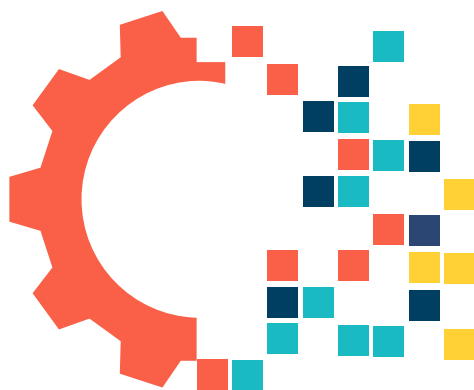
Replacing a disparate, often paper-reliant admissions system with a digital one saves time and increases ROI. The following renowned HEIs have shared their findings with us.

### Stockholm School of Economics (SSE)

Sweden has a centralised system for HEI applications, which meant that Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) was unable to customise the application experience for applicants. At the time, the admissions team was running a paper application system. They required an admissions platform that would allow them to customise and save time.

After implementing FULL FABRIC's admissions solution, SSE was able to facilitate a more student-driven process while engaging a growing number of leads.

In fact, after replacing spreadsheets with their new digital platform, the team saw the number of leads and applicants increase by 20 per cent. Needless to say, the digital documentation of the process has increased transparency to 100 per cent.



### The Lisbon MBA

The simple fact was that The Lisbon MBA found itself in the middle of an increasingly competitive market. The team knew it needed a digital admissions platform that would enable the institution to attract the best and brightest candidates. What's more, it was using different systems for different processes which was proving time-consuming.

After embracing a digital admissions platform, The Lisbon MBA could manage the applicant journey - as well as the entire student lifecycle - collaboratively from one system. The number of successfully enrolled students quickly increased by 18 per cent and they were able to attract 27 per cent more international students to campus.

*"FULL FABRIC gives us a 360-degree view of the pipeline. I can instantly see where people are in their decision-making process and customise my communications accordingly. FULL FABRIC has greatly increased our productivity in the marketing and admissions department."*

### **Saïd Foundation**

Before adopting a digital admissions platform, applicants to the Saïd Foundation had to navigate a paper process that would involve downloading, completing and submitting a form through a local representative. The system was paper-heavy, time-consuming and not student-friendly. There was also the underlying risk that paperwork would go missing.

Digital transformation resulted in an impressive 62 per cent increase in applications. The time spent managing and processing applications, on the other hand, dropped by 20 per cent. Admissions officers can personalise applications and automate the capture and routing of applications to facilitate faster and more effective decisions.

Ready to give it a try? Find out how in the next chapter...

## CHAPTER 4

# START YOUR ADMISSIONS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH ORIGIN STARTER

When it comes to kickstarting digital transformation in university admissions, there's no time like the present.

Despite the disruption caused by Covid-19, more people than ever are choosing to study in higher education. In fact, data from UCAS in the UK revealed that there was a 17% increase in new applicants between 23 March 2020 and 30 June 2020 - 54,810 compared to 46,770 in the equivalent period in 2019.

*However, we also understand that HEIs might be cautious about investing in new software at the moment. That's why we're giving free access to a version of our Origin platform.*

### Introducing FULL FABRIC's Origin solution

Origin is a scalable admissions platform.

Origin equips you with all the tools you need to implement a branded admissions portal and a more intuitive applicant user journey. By strengthening your institution's digital reputation and making it easier for admissions staff to process and track applications, you can increase the number of applicants and enrolled students.

### What can I use Origin for, exactly?

#### 1. An engaging applicant experience

Make your application process stand out. FULL FABRIC enables you to completely personalize the entire process giving you the flexibility to quickly adjust and adapt the applicant experience

#### 2. Customisable application forms

Customisable and easy to build using our intuitive editor: simply drag-and-drop the fields you want to include and specify whether each is mandatory or optional.

#### 3. Powerful and easy to build

Easily create interactive, user-friendly and intelligent applications and make it easy for applicants to upload documents, request references, integrate with social media and pay the application fee.



#### 4. Mobile accessible

Applicants can save and access their application anytime and on any device.

#### 5. Track & understand engagement

From a strategic perspective, one of Origin's most useful features is its in-built analytics. Analytics enable you to see the number of views and submissions in real time to gain an understanding of what converts and what doesn't.

**Start using Origin for free today**

GIVE IT A TRY



## CHAPTER 5

# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION BEYOND ADMISSIONS

Digital transformation doesn't stop at the admissions phase; it should be part of a whole lifecycle digital initiative. As well as helping to increase application and rates, technology can enable universities to become more resilient student retention-wise.

### Foundation CRM

Build and nurture relationships through the entire student lifecycle. An end to end CRM that allows universities to track and monitor each of the student interactions throughout the entire journey.

### Core

After implementing Origin, you can use Core across a range of departments to engage and foster relationships with existing students. From building study plans and creating course schedules to tracking attendance, assignments and managing grades - this digital tool helps keep students on the path to success.

### Connector

When it comes to word of mouth, alumni is one of your most valuable assets.

With Connector, you can maintain your relationship with graduates and track details such as changes of address or employment. Your alumni can stay in touch via a mobile-responsive portal that enables individuals to receive updates and connect with others.

### Final thoughts...

To remain globally competitive in the eyes of future applicants, HEI's must embrace digital change. In digitising the admissions process, your department will have the resources it needs to become more efficient, secure and effective. And by unifying processes under one platform, your HEI can focus more of its attention on the strategic side of things.

**Give Origin Starter a try today.**

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