Reducing admission times for prospective students with automated clearance checks

THE CHALLENGE

As the university receives over 20,000 admissions from prospective students each year, processing these applications was a significant time and administrative resource burden for its Admissions Team. Each admission is subject to multiple clearance checks within Keele's back-office system – TribalSITS.

The task involved manually rekeying large volumes of data for the purpose of UCAS reviews in a highly repetitive, standardised process of updating and flagging student records against respective applicant criteria. Depending on the number of clearance checks required for each student, this process could take anywhere from five to ten minutes per admission. Particularly during peak periods, clearance checks demanded notable resources and could only be actioned during working hours.

THE SOLUTION

The university identified the process as one to uplift, deciding to implement a digital solution to replace the manual rekeying procedure in place. After careful consideration, the university opted to implement RPA with NDL Automate. Its first project has seen the automation of an initial six clearance checks, including GCSE qualifications, contextual data checks and disability status - allowing the university to take an agile approach and deliver benefits quickly.

KEY BENEFITS

Quicker admissions process for prospective students

Time savings equivalent to 1 FTE reinvested into the Admissions Team

Improved data accuracy with reduced error

"NDL's Robotic Process Automation has allowed us to provide an automated solution to help improve the processing of applications. Throughout the process NDL has provided valuable support to ensure this process was complete. We are now looking at further opportunities across the University where RPA could be implemented."

Andy Locker
Development Manager

Emulating the rekeying process as a member of the Admissions Team would, Automate bots are now able to independently process these checks within the university's back-office systems 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Where any further intervention is required, bots flag these instances for the Admissions Team to review.

THE BENEFITS

The automated clearance check process is already delivering a number of impactful benefits within the university - the most important being improved student experience with a faster admission turnaround. However, the university estimates impressive ROI and internal benefits too.

The project is already saving time equivalent to one FTE, with the university forecasting further savings with the implementation of further autonomous clearance checks. This has allowed the organisation to improve staff experience through the eradication of monotonous rekeying, leaving more time for human-centric work where this resource is better placed. Not only does this allow the university to increase resources and reinvest into its operations for the benefit of the institution's employees, but its students and prospective applicants as well.

WHAT'S NEXT?

After successfully implementing its first six clearance checks, the university is now working towards further RPA clearance processes. The benefits of the project are already inspiring further usage across the organisation, and the team is currently scoping further processes for automation within its HR department and support desk.

Want to learn more about Keele University's RPA transformations, or interested to learn how NDL's Evolve Transformation Platform could benefit your organisation? Book a demo today or get in touch with a member of our team. Looking for more inspiration? Hear more about the NDL Community and its projects at our online and in-person events – or browse our library of innovative public sector case studies.

"*The implementation of RPA on our application checks will greatly improve the efficiency of our admissions processing. The Admissions team will now only have to check the subjective aspects of our selection process safe in the knowledge that the system has checked all of the pre-populated data. In an environment where applications are on the increase and speed of issuing offers is key to successful conversion, this project puts Keele in a strong recruitment position going forward.*"

Carolyn Charlton
Admissions Manager

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Visit www.ndl.co.uk for more information or to discuss Automate, contact our team: info@ndl.co.uk