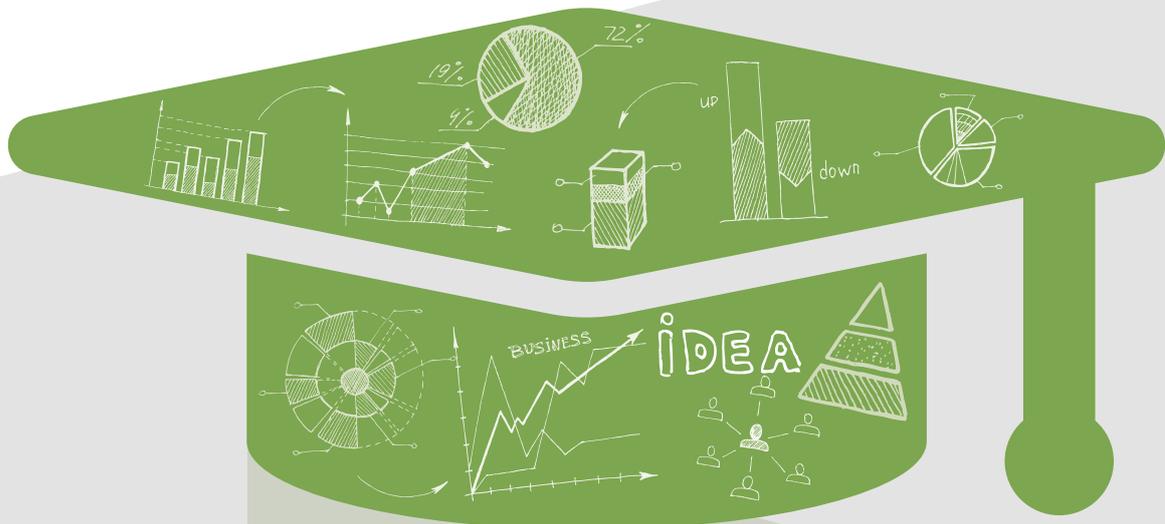


Integrated Student Lifecycle Management

Higher Education: Gaining the Edge through Outstanding Student Experiences



- Students have developed a consumerist ethos towards universities.
- Higher education institutions need to future-proof themselves for the digital age.
- The keys are a next-generation IT strategy and integrated student lifecycle management.

About the Author



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Tom has over 15 years of experience in SAP higher education and a natural interest in new developments and evolutions in technology. He combines this with a broad network in and outside SAP, so he is always up to date with the latest trends and innovations. His passion is cycling and he loves to spend time with his children, family, and friends.

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2. Executive Summary

Nothing is certain except change. This also applies to higher education: The number and variety of competitors is rising fast, and recent studies show that students across all year groups, institutional types, and subjects have developed a challenging consumerist ethos towards universities. They want value for money – in terms of contact hours and available resources and through institutions' investment in students, learning spaces, and the educational community.

This white paper illustrates how a university (or any other higher education institution) can improve its quality of education and research, attract a diverse and talented student population, gain all-important analytical insight, and at the same time future-proof its operating model for the digital age. The key to climbing the rankings is **a next-generation IT strategy that focuses on integrated student lifecycle management for the “digitally empowered, consumerist student”**.

Integrated and innovative student lifecycle management will support all student-related administrative tasks and create outstanding student experiences that are as simple and convenient as online shopping. Easy-to-use analytics solutions enhance transparency, support decision-making for all parties involved in the student lifecycle, and reduce technology costs.

3. Trends and Challenges in Higher Education

In many areas of life, change is the only constant. This is also true in higher education: International student mobility is intensifying the war for talent. For institutions, the number and variety of regional and global competitors is rising fast. Furthermore, with public funding of higher education under pressure, it is often the students that end up paying the price.

Recent studies show that in the wake of this trend, students across all year groups, institutional types, and subjects have developed a challenging consumerist ethos towards higher education institutions. They want better value for money – in terms of contact hours and resources available and through institutions' investment in students, learning spaces, and the educational community. In addition, as mobile device ownership among students is already high and continues to increase, they expect to use and profit from their smartphones in their academic lives, too.

Therefore, the focus on student satisfaction has become more prominent. It is essential to give students the right support from application to graduation, throughout all the processes that need to be performed and all the requirements that need to be fulfilled. To survive in this increasingly competitive environment, institutions must rethink their delivery models for teaching, learning, and, last but not least, administration, so they can capitalize on change now rather than being consumed by it.



Rethink all the delivery models.

However, the reality is different: Rising expectations and costs, declining affordability, online and for-profit competitors, and other factors have created a growing sense of uncertainty among administrators, registrars, faculty, and staff. How can they prepare their institution for this new situation? What is the way to a successful future?

 The key to success is a next-generation IT strategy that focuses on integrated student lifecycle management that provides best experiences to the “digitally empowered, consumerist student”.

Even the most daunting times of change always come with huge opportunity. This is especially true from an IT perspective. There have never been greater options to deploy the capabilities of (business) IT as a strategic means for market differentiation.

Institutions cannot remain static and expect to survive; they must assess the changing environment and take timely action in collaboration with IT when required. They have to implement smart solutions and tools for smooth and efficient services – tools that automate processes, accelerate the flow of activity, and allow administrations to handle complex tasks with ease.

First, we will examine the five key factors in the future success of any higher education institution:

- Support the complete student journey
- Adapt to the non-traditional student and non-traditional forms of education
- Provide student and learning analytics everywhere
- Improve student retention and outcomes
- Embrace vanilla implementations

Support the Complete Student Journey

A solid and flexible student information system (SIS) that revolves around both the value for administration staff and the experience of students has become a prerequisite for successful management of any higher education institution. It should move beyond the traditional student records system, be efficient and reliable, and facilitate administrative processes at all levels from application through registration to graduation.

On the one hand, all data regarding the student must be recorded, standardized, and accessible for the administration staff. On the other hand, the system must support the students' growing information needs as well. All relevant information should be available through a portal or, preferably, a mobile solution as today's students want to be able to check all details using their smartphone or tablet. These details range from exam results and timetables to teachers' contact details and more.



All relevant information available.

Figure 1: The Student Lifecycle at a Glance



When it comes to recruiting and retaining the students that best fit in with their missions and programs, higher education institutions are facing increasing competition. This means they have to deliver an exceptional student experience to make themselves stand out. Managing information and relationships across the entire student lifecycle from a holistic perspective is now a top priority. This also signifies that the boundaries between SIS, e-commerce, and CRM applications will blur.

To optimize and justify the quality of their academic choices, management needs to combine information from diverse systems to create a single source of the truth for reports on the strategic, tactical, and operational levels. Access to accurate, integrated data has become essential to achieving – or even exceeding – objectives.

Adapt to the Non-Traditional Student and Non-Traditional Forms of Education

Most people still picture the typical student as a young high school graduate in his or her early 20s who lives close to the university and whose schedule is determined by a mix of classes and other campus activities. Today, however, this example actually represents the minority in higher education.

Recent figures from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the USA show that the majority of students in higher education are now considered “non-traditional” students. They tend to be older, have more work experience, and are more socioeconomically diverse.¹ In addition, in times of massive open online courses (MOOCs), social media, and webinars, learning can happen in many ways. This questions the traditional degree path, forcing institutions to adapt to the changing demographics of the student population. To do that, they must offer a wider range of courses and greater flexibility for working or travelling students, for example through distance learning and online resources.



Non-traditional students on the rise.

Considering these statistics and developments, there can be little doubt that besides the traditional students, non-traditional (or lifelong-learning) students will establish themselves as an important and continuously growing market segment. Whether due to campus culture, limited resources, or an administration and faculty unwilling to modify their academic and administrative structure, many institutions are missing the chance to attract and educate this increasingly important segment of students.

In order to stay relevant and attractive, institutions must dedicate the same amount of energy and resources to non-traditional programs, including an institution-wide commitment to developing new academic programs and creating better administrative structures for non-traditional students.

¹ <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2012/03/opinion/nontraditional-students-are-the-new-majority-from-the-bell-tower/>

Provide Student and Learning Analytics Everywhere

As mentioned above, institutions are looking for new ways to offer the perfect individual support to every single student at the right moment. One of the biggest challenges is that they are not entirely sure what kind of data is relevant to predict student success or to determine possible risk of failure. Therefore, in order to develop the right strategies for increasing student success and retention, they need to acquire a full and consistent understanding of the metrics involved. Preconfigured tools and learning and student analytics can guide institutions quickly and easily to the desired metrics and up-to-date insights they need to improve collaboration and communication between faculties and every single student. In this way, they can really prove their support for students on their path to a degree.



Improve collaboration and communication.

Learning analytics leverage student data to deliver personalized learning, enable adaptive methods of teaching, and identify issues before they can evolve into serious problems. Furthermore, analytics can deliver deeper insights into students' needs and behavior and enable universities to predict the probability of academic success. Administrations can then offer personalized, proactive engagement and counseling to students based on up-to-date facts and information.

Today, data warehouses and the cloud make it possible to collect, manage, maintain, and analyze vast numbers of records. They turn the mass of figures into meaningful patterns and actionable information for decision-making. Special predictive techniques allow faculty and staff to take action in order to support student success and retention before they are seriously at risk. That is why predictive analytics can become a very powerful strategical tool for improving student success and saving money through improved retention, thereby increasing the university's position in the rankings.

Improve Student Retention and Success

In order to attract new students and retain them, student success and engagement have become major priorities for many institutions. The increasing global competition for students, combined with government mandates for transparency and improved results, increase the pressure on universities. A strong focus on student success is all the more important given the fact that there is a general trend toward consumerization and personalization in our society. Students expect value for money and measurable return on their investment from higher education. Flexible and individualized mobile services on a 24/7 basis will become an absolute necessity for the future.

Yet a recent study by Ovum revealed that most institutions are still underprepared. They lack a comprehensive strategy to address their student performance and retention goals.

Embrace Vanilla Implementations

When reflecting on the four points above, one thing becomes clear: Institutions need to focus on personalized, student-centric, and innovative student services to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive environment. Moreover, as digital or mobile services continue to establish themselves in education and support services, the IT department will play a key role in driving change.

However, the majority of the IT department's time and budget is spent on maintaining existing platforms, applications, and services. This leaves little time to think about service innovation or decision-making support through big data analytics. Customizations are time-consuming and require both financial and expert resources.

The answer to this comes in the form of standardized processes and solutions based on best practices. By adopting a flexible standard SIS that complies with predefined criteria, institutions can support a wide variety of students and courses and offer highly personalized services. They also benefit from vanilla (standard) implementations, i.e. without modifying software and databases. Such implementations offer the advantages of simple integrations and quick time to value. In this way, institutions can improve their administrative capabilities and become more adaptable to the needs of an ever-changing education market in the digital age.



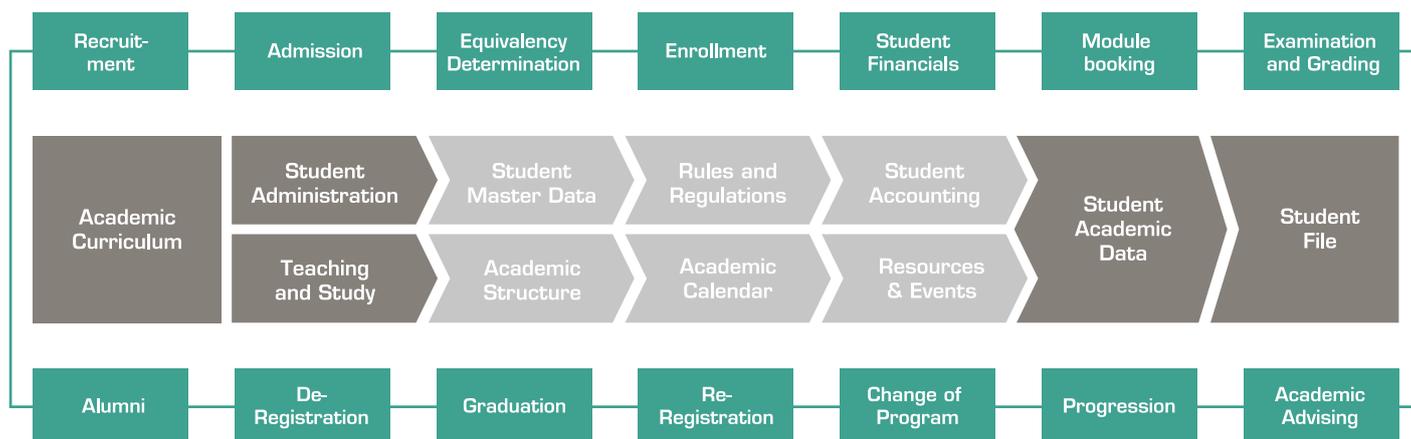
Institutions need to focus on personalized, student-centric, and innovative student services.

4. Becoming a Smarter University

Integrate and Manage the Whole Student Lifecycle

There can be little doubt that student success and retention will continue to be two of the most challenging issues facing higher education. It is essential for the administration to give students the right support from enrolment to graduation: covering all the processes that need to be carried out and all requirements that need to be met. In helping to maintain a smooth flow of activity and to handle the amount of tasks at once, it is essential to have the right tools. For example, with it.education, an industry-specific solution based on SAP Student Lifecycle Management, institutions can innovate and support all of their study-related processes – from online registration, schedules, and exam grades to self-service tools and apps for students and faculty members (see figure below).

Figure 2: it.education – A Fully Integrated Student Information System



With it.education, institutions can make significant progress on their way to increasing student success and student retention by:

- Creating an individualized learning experience
- Using data and models to predict student progress and performance
- Being able to directly act on up-to-date reports, insights, and information
- Gaining and providing real-time insight into student performances
- Using simplified, role-based applications that work on any device

A special practice-proven methodology helps organizations to implement SAP solutions for Higher Education & Research with maximum efficiency. It is based on wide experience in implementing student information systems and is already being used by many renowned universities worldwide. Examples include: Maastricht University, VU Amsterdam, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, TU Berlin, Saxion University of Applied Sciences, La Trobe, KAUST, and De Montfort University.

The technological platform offers the simplification and innovations introduced in SAP S/4HANA, SAP’s new, future-oriented ERP suite that acts as the “digital core” of enterprises. This includes an advanced in-memory platform, a personalized user experience, embedded real-time analysis, and extensive finance and accounting capabilities. The solution can easily be incorporated into any existing university IT landscape. It can be run, managed, and maintained either on-premise by any institution’s IT department or as a fully externally managed, hassle-free solution hosted in one of itelligence’s data centers.

 With SAP’s Higher Education & Research solutions, we are now positioned to realize significant financial benefits in the coming years.

Anne Kaldewaij, former Program Director for New Student Information Systems, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Communicate from Prospect to Student to Alumni and Beyond



Transform
for the
future now.

As people's private life and the economy rapidly become digitized, permanent change through technological innovation becomes the rule. Universities need to start transforming for the future now. Through this transformation, they can increase enrolment, enhance learning, and improve graduation rates. In an ideal scenario, student information systems facilitate communications well beyond the recruitment and enrolment cycles. The it.education solution supports the full 'student lifecycle journey', which means that the system facilitates communications and engagement with students from the prospect stage to alumnus.

This approach especially focuses on the fact that alumni relations are now an all-important part of an institution's ability to grow and advance. Alumni provide ideal role models for current students and can offer start-up support for student careers. They can also act as fundraising prospects, business incubators, professional/social networkers, and international ambassadors of inestimable value for their alma mater. Maintaining permanent communication with alumni means institutions can make them part of their future, not just their past.



Maintaining permanent communication with alumni means institutions can make them part of their future, not just their past.

Improve Student Engagement

The institutional focus on student engagement links closely to the overall student experience and short- and long-term outcomes, such as retention and course completion. While there is currently a drive to focus more strongly on data and metrics, there is also the need to listen to and understand students' needs relative to the institutional mission and offerings. It is likely that the answer lies somewhere between the two, in a balanced combination of both dimensions that drives both improved engagement and outcomes.

Of course, student engagement is strongly related to effective learning and in-depth learning. However, there is always a social component that needs to be, and can be addressed. Modern administrative services based on it.education can create a sense of social belonging through personal support and interaction, for example between student advisors and students.

 We provide our students with an improved digital environment as attractive and intuitive as an online store. In doing this, Saxion became one of the very first universities to implement webshop functionality. This has significantly accelerated and simplified the student enrolment process.

Cora Woltring, Project Manager, Saxion University of Applied Sciences

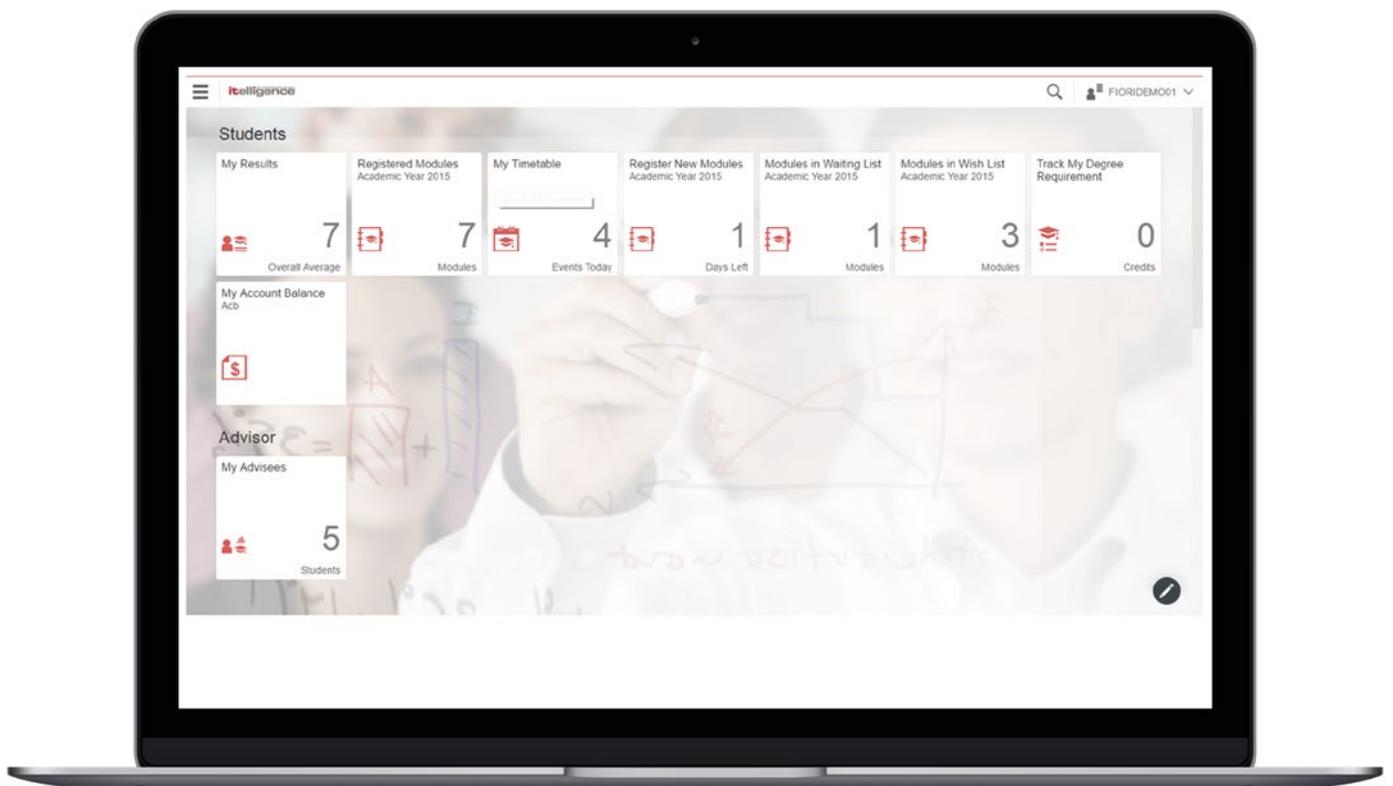
Focus on the User Experience

The it.education solution helps institutions to differentiate themselves immediately, but also allows them to transform and optimize processes later. It is a highly flexible solution that supports organizations in adapting to any situation or challenge. Differentiating the student experience across the entire student lifecycle has to involve a far greater number of stakeholders than stand-alone processes for admissions and alumni affairs. So how can they be integrated without extensive training and extra costs?



Adapt to any situation or challenge.

Figure 3: The SAP Fiori Dashboard Enables Role-Based User Experiences



The SAP Fiori user interface that comes with it.education provides the answer. Based on modern design principles it provides a unique, role-based experience across all lines of higher education institutions, tasks, and devices. It works seamlessly on desktop, tablet, and smartphone. Based on an attractive and intuitive user experience for all people concerned, institutions can easily involve more stakeholders on a regular basis. Faculty members, teachers, finance experts, counselors and, above all, students easily find all information and capabilities clearly visualized on a dashboard, helping them to communicate and collaborate successfully along the entire student lifecycle.

Get Analytical

When it comes to student analytics, an institution's primary aim is to generate robust, evidence-based analysis and evaluation about the most effective practices that ensure high retention and completion rates.

One of the biggest challenges institutions are facing is that they are not entirely sure what data to look at. To predict the likelihood of student success or risk of failure, administrators and faculty have to collaborate closely and define how success can be measured in concrete terms. An effective way to do this is to set objectives based on the SMART criteria (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely).

Industry-specific solutions, such as it.education, support institutions in establishing powerful student analytics. They provide cost-effective and reliable methods and tools that enable faculties to:

- Collect and analyze student data
- Handle complex data consolidation tasks arising from disparate systems
- Visualize and interpret data accurately within seconds
- Determine and take appropriate individual actions based on sound information

Harness the Power of Predictive Analytics

The stakes are higher than ever for academic institutions to prove they can help their students succeed on their path to a degree. That is why a growing number of campuses implement early warning systems that alert students when they are at risk of poor results.

Many universities have realized that software for predictive analytics is a very powerful strategic means to boost student success and save money through improved retention. Predictive analytics involves extracting an analytical model from multiple sources of data to predict future behavior or results of student activities. Finally, big data, which has been available for a long time on campuses, can now be used to signal the need for intervention and support immediate action whenever a student is at risk of losing focus or needs personal advice.

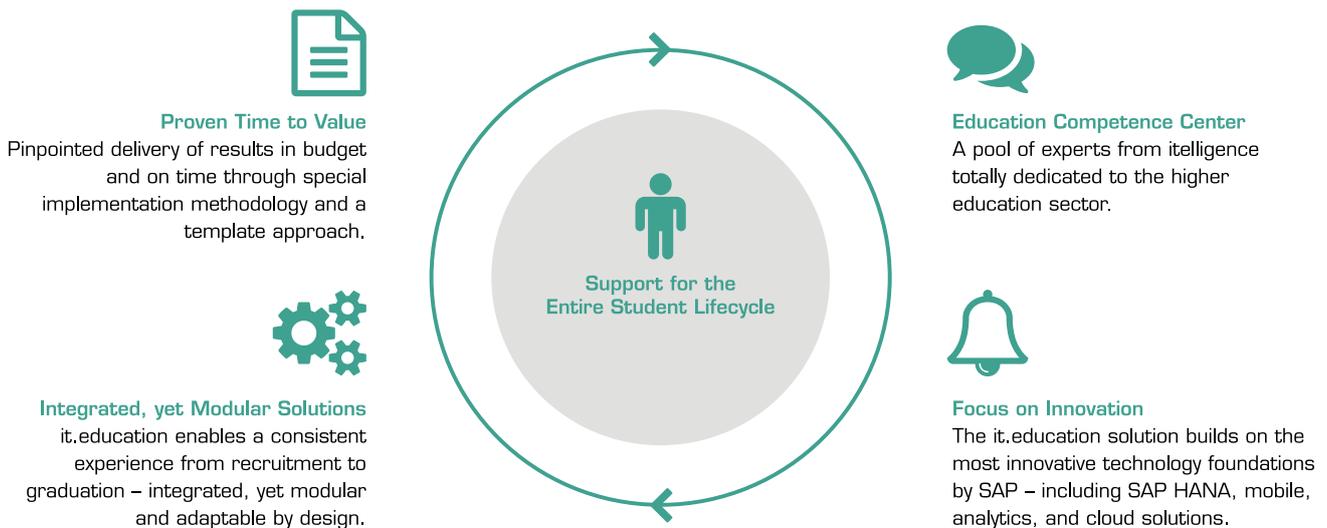
It is worth bearing in mind that, while the majority of the higher education analytics tools currently on the market claim to use predictive analytics, there are only few tools that can actually live up to the promise.

5. The Value of Partnering with itelligence

itelligence has a proven record of accomplishment in enabling higher education institutions to succeed and grow. Based on experience gained from a multitude of projects, clients can count on a comprehensive understanding of the major challenges for higher education institutions, including global competition, government mandates, changing business models, and technological advances.

It is itelligence's primary objective to focus on quality, efficiency, and innovation. The it.education solution gives institutions the tools to differentiate themselves quickly and at the same time maintain sufficient flexibility to take further transform-ational steps easily at a later stage.

Figure 4: The Value Proposition of itelligence at a Glance



The value proposition of itelligence is built on four pillars, as depicted in the figure above:

Education Competence Center

The Education Competence Center is a proven pool of specialists. It was here that the it.education solution was developed. All the experts live and breathe education issues. They are always up-to-date with the latest developments in the sector and are keen to find the best solutions for clients.

Integrated yet Modular Solutions

itelligence and SAP offer the most comprehensive portfolio for higher education and research, enabling a consistent experience from recruitment to graduation. The solutions are integrated, yet modular, and can be adapted to the suit specific needs of any institution of higher education.

Proven Time to Value

Many of the world’s leading higher education and research institutions across the global academic and research field rely on itelligence’s proven implementation methodology and template approach. These help to deliver results that always meet cost and time specifications.

Focus on Innovation

it.education is a refined industry-specific solution based on the SAP portfolio for higher education. It builds upon the enterprise IT industry’s most innovative technology foundations – including SAP HANA, mobile solutions, analytics, and cloud solutions. The focus is on optimizing business processes and delivering efficiency at the lowest possible cost.

6. Summary

Change is indeed the only constant. And it is frequently accompanied by a strong feeling of unease and uncertainty. This is especially the case in the higher education sector as it faces a number of challenges arising from globalization and digitization.

What matters is an institution's ability to rethink its delivery models for teaching, learning, and administration quickly, and to focus on student satisfaction. The mission: To give students the best possible personal support throughout their entire journey from enrolment to graduation and alumni.

As we have seen in this white paper and the examples given: The future of administration in higher education has arrived. With an easy-to-implement, adaptable solution that focuses on integration, value-added services, improved analytical insight, and excellent user experiences along the entire student lifecycle, universities have huge opportunities to excel in student retention and differentiate themselves from the competition.

When it comes to taking the decision for the right future-oriented technology, it is important to have an experienced and reliable partner at your side. A partner that gives you the reassuring feeling that – even as students continue to become more consumerist, mobile, and demanding – the 'war for student talent' can be won.

7. Why itelligence

As an SAP Global Partner with a strong focus on higher education, we offer unrivalled knowledge of the challenges in educational institutions. We can help colleges and universities to improve the support for both students and staff – and ultimately help you advance academic achievement. Tailor-made business management software from itelligence helps you manage all student-related data and processes with maximum efficiency and security, while improving access and usability to a broader range of value-added services that increase student success and retention.



8. Find out more

Learn more about how itelligence can support your journey to improved student success and retention based on end-to-end student lifecycle management.

Visit:

www.itelligencegroup.com/education

Contact us to arrange a value discovery workshop to uncover the potential of best-fit SAP solutions for higher education.

If you want to know more about integrated student lifecycle management please contact:

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About itelligence

You need to make the most of your investment in technology. And when you choose SAP, naturally you want to gain every benefit. So you deserve to work alongside an IT partner who is passionate about helping you succeed.

We live and breathe SAP and SAP only. We are the right partner if you want to get the most out of the incredible opportunities SAP can deliver. Our global expertise sets us apart from other partners, as does the relationship with our parent company NTT Data. That means financial stability, a commitment to innovation and access to a team of over 8,000 SAP consultants worldwide.

Across industries and in different regions, we will work closely with you every step of the way to deliver sustainable results. We will help you improve your operations, reach your goals and outperform your local and global competitors.

www.itelligencegroup.com