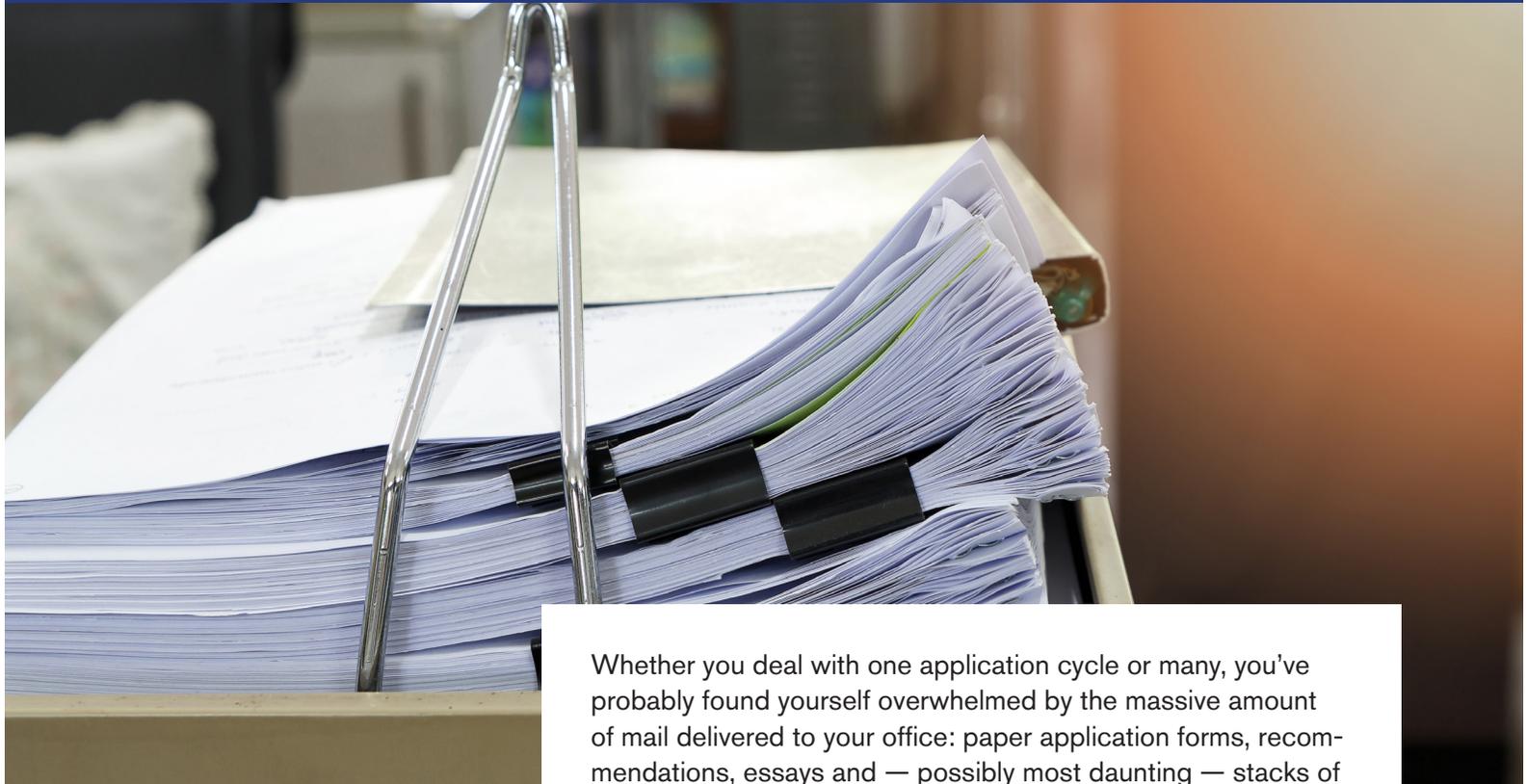


Taming the Admissions Paper Beast:

6 Reasons Your Applicants and Admissions Team will Love Going Paperless



Whether you deal with one application cycle or many, you've probably found yourself overwhelmed by the massive amount of mail delivered to your office: paper application forms, recommendations, essays and — possibly most daunting — stacks of official transcripts to verify and GPAs to calculate.

Inefficient paper processes aren't just a headache. They put your admissions office at risk and divert time from important tasks like student outreach and evaluation.

While maintaining mountains of paper files and admissions documents may seem like an academic tradition, there's a more accurate and efficient way to manage the process. With a Centralized Application Service (CAS™), a cloud-based admissions solution adopted by over 31,000 programs on more than 1,000 campuses, you can manage even the most complex admissions processes in a completely paperless environment. A CAS frees up the resources you need to identify, evaluate and enroll the best students you can.

Read on for six of the greatest benefits of going paperless.

1 Become more efficient and accurate.

Flexible, configurable online applications that meet individual school and program needs eliminate time-consuming tasks like opening mail, assembling packets and storing application folders. Applicants can upload supporting documents, such as professional licenses or writing samples. In fact, everything you need is available from a single point of entry — including tools to help you schedule interviews, apply scoring rubrics and communicate with applicants.

Instead of printing documents, filing them and then having to search for them manually at a later date, your document retrieval process becomes as simple as conducting an online search, saving staff time.¹

Transcript verification services and automated GPA calculation save you time and improve accuracy. With data stored in the cloud, everyone on campus who needs access to an application can have it whenever they need it. No more hunting down file folders buried in a stack of paperwork on someone's desk. Finally, the data you collect about admitted students can easily integrate with your student information system of record for seamless record keeping.

NursingCAS™, the CAS for nursing programs, helps Del Mar College's part-time admissions coordinator, Karen Perring, manage admissions tasks more accurately and in less time than ever before. That's especially important for a department that admits in both the fall and spring. "When I came on board, evaluating and admitting students was a really lengthy, paper-based process," Perring said.

Verifying transcripts for students who had often attended multiple programs before applying to Del Mar could take hours. Managing correspondence and notifications for every student was also daunting. "It took quite a bit of time for just one applicant. With over 200 applicants, it just became untenable," said Perring. With NursingCAS, the admissions team manages those processes online.

Because transcripts are verified, matching prerequisites to Del Mar's degree plan takes just minutes.

2 Communicate more effectively with applicants.

Through an online portal, applicants can check the status of their applications in real time from their laptops or mobile devices. They can see where they are in the process and quickly access deadlines and additional information. You spend less time answering routine questions and more time providing expert counsel about your program and its career pathways.

A CAS offers robust tools so that you can communicate with applicants directly from the service, resolving issues with less hassle and speeding the admissions decision. Automating reminders about incomplete applications, notices that materials like transcripts and test scores have been received, interview confirmations and even acceptance notifications ensures students know exactly what's going on and feel connected with your institution.

Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs Richard Goranflo, EdD, said that at OHSU, applicants have been taking advantage of the real-time information the service provides. Before, applicants couldn't upload transcripts, CVs or other

supporting documents, leaving them in the dark about whether the admissions team had received all necessary materials. "Now applicants are getting real-time updates," Goranflo said. "They can get a snapshot of where they are in the process, which is enormously helpful and has dramatically reduced the amount of calls and emails we get."

3 Make life easier for faculty reviewers.

With a CAS, programs can create scoring rubrics that support their unique requirements and reviewers access student applications online. All the information is available in one place, and faculty can verify the criteria to evaluate applicants, ensuring consistency.

Samford University Assistant Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services Dr. Marian Carter said faculty at her school, especially those who were new to holistic review, were delighted with the ease of using a CAS. "We're very committed to holistic review here," Dr. Carter said. "When we get together we know extraordinary details about these students — their personal goals, mission trips or community service experiences. We have rubrics in place to score all of these different elements and weigh them fairly."

Dr. Christine Carmichael, director of graduate admissions for the Department

"Today's students, not surprisingly, prefer submitting applications electronically rather than on paper, along with letters of recommendation and SAT and ACT scores. Audio or video submissions are now common... and the admissions process continues to rapidly evolve, further reducing the role of paper."

— Ricoh Higher Education Trend Report, April 2016

of Communication Disorders, experienced similar results at Our Lady of the Lake University. “The feedback from my faculty is amazing,” she said. “Before, it would take up to a week to review 60 or so folders, with faculty spending every waking moment that we weren’t teaching, in meetings or doing research looking at graduate applications. Now, we still have two faculty reviewers for each applicant, but they can review all of their applicants within one day’s time — in less than an 8-hour day.” CSDCAS™, the CAS for communication sciences and disorders, processes and calculates points according to rubrics defined and configured by the Department, ranking applicants automatically based on coursework and test scores. This allows faculty to focus more time on reviewing personal statements, letters of recommendation, research and volunteer experience and scholarships and awards.

4 Save space on campus.

Filing cabinets take up space — often at a premium on campus. Data storage costs significantly less than the facilities required to house the hundreds of paper files produced during a single admissions cycle. By going paperless, organizations can free up closets, additional storage space and even office space, reducing overhead expenses.¹

5 Leverage data to make informed decisions.

A CAS provides tools to help you analyze your applicant pool at a very granular level. You can quickly see trends and determine whether you’re on track to meet your strategic goals. By understanding who your applicants are and where they’re coming from, you can focus your efforts on those students most likely to enroll and succeed. And with all the information stored in one place, you can access the data you need to determine where you’re doing well and identify areas that could use more attention.

Jon Parker, assistant director of admissions at Samford University’s McWhorter School of Pharmacy, uses standard reports built into the service to gain a deeper understanding of the applicant pool for more targeted recruiting. “It’s great to be able to look at where our applicants are coming from and which undergraduate programs are the largest feeders of the national applicant pool,” Parker said, noting that the information allows him to understand where to apply critical recruiting dollars. “We can look at current data, compare numbers over the past five years and figure out, do we still need to make a personal visit, or do we do something more cost efficient?”

6 Work more strategically.

Taming the paper beast ultimately allows you to focus your resources where they will have the most impact. Once the administrative burden has been lifted, you can begin to define — and refine — your goals. With robust admission management capabilities, you can work more strategically to recruit, evaluate, admit and enroll best-fit students, design a holistic admissions approach that works for your program and compete more effectively with your peer institutions.

Chad Oppelt, The College of St. Scholastica’s assistant director of graduate and extended studies recruitment, credits Liaison’s GPA calculation and transcript entry services with freeing his staff for more strategic work. With each CAS application accompanied by about three transcripts, Oppelt observed that the transcript verification services save him and his staff from having to review several thousand transcripts each cycle. The time that they are not spending on these manual tasks is instead free for attending events and directly nurturing interested applicants. “We have saved the equivalent of a full-time person through our adoption of these CASs. That’s a 1.0 that we didn’t lose — that we were instead able to integrate into more quintessential admissions counseling,” Oppelt said.

“At Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, we process more than 2,000 applications during the month of January — it’s a very tight timeframe. SOPHAS™ [the CAS for schools and programs of public health] allows one person to manage the faculty review process across eight departments and programs, and SOPHAS has the tools we need to communicate regularly with those applicants and deliver a better experience to them.”

– Vincent W. James, Director of Admissions

LESS PAPER, MORE PRODUCTIVITY

Implementing a paperless admissions process isn't just better for the environment — it's better for your institution. According to a study conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of Ricoh, "Colleges that present themselves as technology-smart can attract students in a highly competitive market."² If you're ready to improve efficiency, accuracy and prospective student engagement, you're ready for a CAS.

Visit liaisonedu.com to learn more.

REFERENCES

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