IBPMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ProcessMaker

Contents

Introduction

Intelligent Business Process Management (iBPMS) software adoption continues to grow in higher education. The need is in both the revolutionary advantages of digital process automation and optimization, digital agility, efficiency, and productivity as well as the urgency for digital transformation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the easy interaction between your school's existing systems, faculty, staff, and strategic initiatives, iBPMS is a valuable tool for any higher education institution.

When implemented correctly, iBPMS can change the context of process and application automation and management helping end users to mitigate the issues around disparate systems and instead focus on higher-level, mission critical functions and workflows for your school.

It helps to remember that iBPMS delivers results even when projects start small. With continuous improvements to your newly digitized and automated workflows, you will gradually see digital transformation across campus at your school. In addition, iBPMS automatically creates an audit trail paired with activity monitoring to keep the right people informed of the right information at the right time.

iBPMS is repeatable where it can automate multiple processes for as long as needed. So then, higher education can cut through the mounds of ineffective, manual, largely paper-based processes and deliver true digital agility to your school.

iBPMS can be used to connect all disparate school systems onto a centralized platform to ensure increased productivity. Further, an iBPMS platform can help to digitize more processes while eliminating the need for in-person signatures, approvals, and reviews.

This white paper will enlighten your understanding of automation in higher education, and offer continued insight into the value proposition of iBPMS. Further, the objective is to help your school achieve digital transformation through successful workflow automation.

Address higher education's challenges with iBPMS

Invariably, universities must follow an organized cadence of workflows to ensure effective operations regardless of school size.

As such, many higher education institutions are starting to realize the benefits of employing process automation throughout campus from student success to the registrar, facilities management and more.

iBPMS

Intelligent business process management software (iBPMS) empowers organizations to intuitively design and automate workflows with a wide range of complexity. By utilizing a low-code iBPMS platform, with intelligent automation, you can build and automate processes that integrate and extend your existing apps and systems. Additionally, iBPMS can track all your processes to mitigate issues and ensure continuous improvement.

iBPMS adds value by automating more complex workflows and empowering users to build solutions to orchestrate the flow of work and information across your school's systems and departments.

With this agile approach to process automation, IT departments can better serve all their end users whether it be administrators, faculty, parents, financial aid, or students. As a result, higher education can focus on their ultimate goal: Offer a high-quality education to students motivated to get ahead in life.

While there are varying ways to achieve this objective, iBPMS gives schools an edge in terms of speed, agility, flexibility, and accuracy.

Streamline the student experience across campus—from recruitment to graduation.

How iBPMS can accelerate educational objectives

Manage the huge amounts of data-driven processes protected by various regulations. iBPMS can help your team with automatic logging, create audit trails, and even digital signatures, for every step in a given workflow.

- Create workflows specific to each department's needs
- Design forms and display screens with no-code
- Connect to popular third party systems (LMS, digital signature tools, DMS)
- Design dashboards for workflow reporting
- Setup notifications for when certain KPIs are met
- Significantly reduce hours required for manual, paper-based workflows

Augment digital transformation

Higher education is the popular path of entry into a diversified economy. How can iBPMS help? It starts with choosing which processes to automate so you can identify which processes need optimization. Yet, to achieve digital transformation at scale, workflows also need to be streamlined and end users must have a continuously positive experience from any device.

With an iBPMS, schools can incorporate essential data with everyday processes, but they also improve student experiences while having the ability to become much more responsive to evolving student demands.

iBPMS platforms have audit trails around their processes to ensure the right information is always available to make the most concise, data-driven decisions. iBPMS can also ensure your solutions are device neutral—regardless of the device, end users can get the information they need.

Then, there is the low-code aspect to facilitate easy app creation for users with pre-built models and a user-friendly interface. iBPMS can also link workflows through disparate channels so team members can collaborate effectively without any blockages. Automation cuts the risk of human error.

Now, higher education can have a connected workforce resilient enough to withstand any future disruptions. This is where the digital transformation manifests: by transforming how you connect your students, faculty, staff, vendors, partners, and more with your school.

iBPMS allows higher education institutions to remain competitive in a digital world. Not only do you have contextual awareness, but you have access to the right data for making the most informed decisions.

There is a stark difference between change and transformation. Change is more immediate and responds to short-term needs. On the other hand, transformation is about taking a holistic approach to meet the needs of the future. Therefore, digital transformation can occur when stakeholders are prepared for proactive and long-term changes.

Where can you start implementing process automation?

There aren't any limits to where you can apply workflow automation using an iBPMS. Before your trial, you need to decide where you can have the biggest impact over time. It helps to begin with an initial project that can provide a high impact immediately. Moreover, using a low-code iBPMS platform, you can design and automate workflows in hours or days, not months.

It's usually easiest to automate processes with limited complexity and build from that experience. It also helps to automate processes that directly impact the student experience.

As your institution starts to see early successes, you can then work on new iBPMS initiatives campus-wide.

Without the constant need for IT assistance, users can solve administrative issues in hours or minutes, instead of waiting days or even months. With the power of organizational innovation at your fingertips, you will naturally drive enhanced digital transformation.

Manage the era of compliance effectively

There isn't any question that the 21st century is the digital era, but it also introduced the world to the era of compliance. Threats to corporate security has increased exponentially over the past two decades. In the wake of these data breaches, every institution is under deeper scrutiny and expected to meet constantly evolving regulations around data privacy, documentation, and more.

Should compliance be a dirty word? Well, it's hard to define since it's never a black-and-white issue. The better an institution can understand and manage risk, the less exposure it will have to bad public relations, expensive litigation, costly fines, and the loss of public trust. Unfortunately, it is rare for any institution to achieve 100 percent compliance.

Nonetheless, compliance touches almost every area of academic and student life in addition to harassment, educational integrity, sexual assault, financial aid, admissions, and athletics. Higher education faces many risks without comprehensive compliance programs in place[3].

The right compliance program should offer the ability to identify and address risks to ensure the institution can respond quickly and with the right data on hand.

Government regulations vary between industries, but there are universal regulations that affect every institution equally. When it comes to compliance, how you manage your business processes can help or hurt in more ways than one.

With iBPMS, you can design and automate processes so that they satisfy compliance requirements. To satisfy regulations, the system logs documentation each time it deploys a process, or a user submits an expense report or invoice. It's critical to automatically translate vague regulatory language into repeatable processes that ensure accountability for every stakeholder involved.

Every process must adhere to the same rules while responding as needed to new compliance regulations. How higher education achieves these action items determines successful or unsuccessful compliance.

Consider audit preparation. Higher education often finds this task challenging because several important parts of the process can be missing. To illustrate, an individual employee might be the only person who can access many of the associated documents. With only one gate holder, it is nearly impossible for fellow employees to replicate the process

3 https://universitybusiness.com/colleges-are-closing-in-on-compliance/

ProcessMaker

iBPMS retains every process step so it is indefinitely searchable and always replicable. Log who the participants are and the tasks they managed, comments they made, files generated, digital signatures verified, and more. You can also automate the attachment of electronic forms to any policy document to ensure each auditor can clearly see what policy was in effect for every specific action. Then, you can record every change to develop a comprehensive audit trail.

Electronic signature collection holds every participant accountable. Further, you can automate the disposal of documents when they are past their mandatory retention dates.

There isn't a magic crystal ball that can guarantee 100 percent compliance, but iBPMS can help to turn your culture and policies into compliant and auditable digital workflows. iBPMS can help to turn your culture and policies into compliant and auditable digital workflows.

It takes an ongoing commitment to implementing the right policies and changing them when needed. Your iBPMS systems can manage everything digitally, which means you have immediate access to a data pool for oversight and better compliance.

By cutting through the silos, you can relieve your school from the looming burden of regulatory compliance and remove the shackles of expensive and complex solutions.

Reshape higher education intelligently in a post-COVID world

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted admissions[3] and instantaneously transformed the student education journey for the foreseeable future.What does this mean for higher education? Standard processes will need to change to meet a new set of needs for returning and incoming college students.

Consider all the recent 2020 high school graduates who could not even attend a public graduation ceremony, or celebrate with their fellow classmates. Many expected to attend in-person college classes, but shuttered campuses forced them to revise their plans.

3 https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewdepietro/2020/04/30/impact-coronavirus-covid-19-colleges-universities/

There is one thing certain in uncertain times: It creates an entirely new set of processes and issues your school must address. For example, note the following:

- Varying admissions requirements
- Communicating with remote students
- Deferring enrollment
- Updating timelines for reopening
- Scheduling faculty and classes
- Ensuring reopening plans meet state and federal health guidelines

And, these are just a few of the latest issues impacting higher education. Yet, none come with a straightforward solution. The key factor, which can help to mitigate all of these types of activities, is agility.

As we have all seen, the circumstances of the pandemic change daily. Nonetheless, decisions made around enrollment and admissions go beyond just the fall semester. And, no one can predict what may or may not happen in the fall and winter or even what might happen in 2021. In a time of rapid fluctuation, it's important for your school to increase its level of responsiveness.

ProcessMaker

Within the current environment, information is vital. Data may be stored in spreadsheets or even disparate systems and point solutions. Moving quickly to update enrollment and admissions means data must be accurate and easily accessible when and where it's needed.

The most efficient way to build apps resilient to the evolving COVID-19 landscape, is with a low-code platform offering pre-built components in a drag-and-drop interface. Speed is key here.

iBPMS is the low-code platform necessary to democratize technology for non-technical users. Even a team member without technical training can create efficient workflows, without burdening an already overwhelmed IT department. iBPMS can also empower the IT department with pre-built modules they can swiftly update with additional coding where needed.

Anyone on your staff can create rapid solutions and put them to use immediately. When it is difficult to make future plans, this form of agility gives higher education an advantage when it comes to providing the right solutions in unprecedented times.

Admissions application requirements are changing, so are classrooms and schedules. Schools are offering more and more courses online. Using a low-code platform doesn't mean you abandon hand-coding. All it means is administrators can now have more control over digital solution development.

Low-code also gives the team members who are closest to the issues the opportunity to create relevant solutions. Much of this has to do with an understanding of the data and which components need to change—it's not something someone in the IT department will understand without an in-depth tutorial. A software developer understands application development, but they don't understand the issues managed by the Registrar's office. While low-code takes away the complexity of hand-coding, it still requires planning and solutions that are relevant to the associated needs.

Usually, universities have relied on various systems and sources of information for managing student data. The difference maker is a low-code platform can integrate all of these sources into a centralized hub accessible by designated end users. Then, your team can use the data to build custom apps that service rapidly changing requirements and needs at your school.

With the arrival of the pandemic, long-term growth plans have also changed. A new playbook is fundamental to success. In terms of hiring, and retention, some institutions have implemented hiring freezes and/or furloughs. Yet, other organizations have openings for team members who can enhance the digital transformation needed to thrive in a post-COVID world. This may mean hiring staff with more technical skills or asking existing staff to partake in citizen development to ensure the university becomes much more resilient to any future, and unforeseen disruptions.

It's really about using workflow automation to drive organizational orchestration. Higher education must do what they can to continue with the admissions process and achieve revenue goals paramount to survival.

When you look at forward-thinking institutions, they are not just trying to put out the short-term fires, they are looking at what happens after the pandemic. How will it change higher education forever, and how does a university adapt? A checklist is just the start. Limiting disruption is another aspect, and deploying the current staff more efficiently is critical as well.

Where can your team make staffing changes without any major disruptions to productivity? How can data support the reassigning of current team members to more critical roles? How can an institution reallocate employees where they can be more useful for meeting pandemic-based challenges? Unquestionably, these types of changes must be made quickly.

Nonetheless, there is the factor of staff data privacy since HR doesn't operate in a bubble. There are documents, forms, requests, and decisions to be made. Before COVID-19, reliance on a paper trail was a more accepted practice. The intense pressures to remain solvent during a time of massive change demands extreme efficiency and digitization. This

is just one example, every department needs to be responsive and work alongside IT to execute workflows in record time and make sure all systems are integrated.

Try doing this with evolving goals and limited resources. iBPMS can provide the following:

- Quickly build apps to create forms and collect data stored in existing systems to integrate with new information.
- Automation workflows and communication to include every designated decision maker.
- Handle approvals more efficiently and more accurately.
- Have more visibility, and control, over all processes.

With iBPMS, you can use intelligent automation to apply relevant data from any document into a shareable hub. Every employee who interacts with a specific workflow can access the necessary data to gain more clarity and speed at making important decisions.
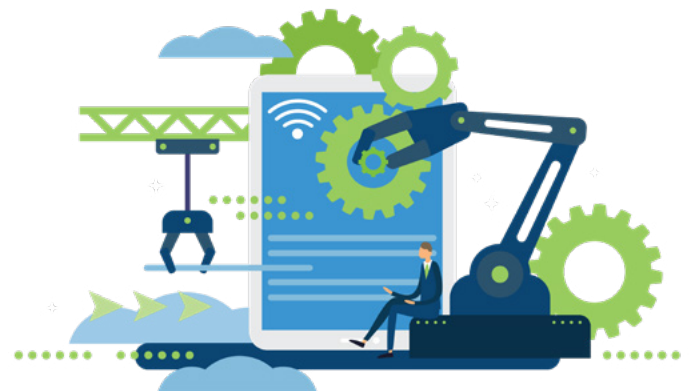
The COVID-19 pandemic will forever change the landscape of higher education[4]. It will also test leaders and administrators for years to come in terms of maintaining their institution's viability. Preparation to operate under the new normal means having the right school, with the right courses, the right data, the right systems, and efficient processes in place.

Therefore, it's important to take advantage of the massive productivity gains you can achieve with the digital transformation you can obtain with iBPMS.

Automate processes throughout systems and departments across your campus and empower your teams to easily design workflows to meet evolving needs. In a post-COVID world, the question is no longer if, but when, you will achieve digital transformation.

---

4 https://fortune.com/2020/04/30/coronavirus-onling-learning-college-student-debt-chegg-covid-19/

In conclusion

While automation isn't a new technology, it is both proven and established and yet constantly evolving[3]. iBPMS can empower higher education to connect staff, students, processes, and data to get work done more quickly and more effectively to meet the expectations of the new normal.

Leverage workflow automation to work on shared goals whether they are short term or long term. With these powerful tools, higher education can finally achieve the needed scalable digital transformation in a changed world.

---

3 https://www.automationanywhere.com/company/press-room/automation-anywhere-named-a-leader-in-the-2019-gart-ner-magic-quadrant-for-rpa-software

About ProcessMaker

ProcessMaker is low-code BPM and workflow software. ProcessMaker makes it easy for business analysts to collaborate with IT to automate complex business processes connecting people and existing company systems. Headquartered in Durham, North Carolina in the United States, ProcessMaker has a partner network spread across 35 countries on five continents. Hundreds of commercial customers, including many Fortune 100 companies, rely on ProcessMaker to digitally transform their core business processes enabling faster decision making, improved compliance, and better performance.

Find out how we can elevate your business today. Learn more at **processmaker.com**

**Request a Free Demo
+1.919.289.1377**