



STUDENT  
SYSTEM  
SOLUTIONS

UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTMINSTER 

# Postgraduate Admissions Project



PACKAGED SOLUTION



ADMISSIONS



STU3 COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

▶ An online application form solution that is easily configurable for multiple admission points.

“We are now able to adapt to changes, we can customise things the way we want them. That’s made things much easier.”

Bhavesh Varsani, Admissions Process Manager

Stu3 Case Study

[www.stu3.co.uk](http://www.stu3.co.uk)

## The Challenge

The number and range of courses offered by the University of Westminster (UoW) has been one of its key competitive strengths. With apprenticeships, pre-sessional courses, and undergraduate through to research level courses, UoW has consistently ranked as one of the most international universities in the UK.

*“There were concerns over the university’s reliance on a service that few other institutions were using, and on an application form over which the university had no control in terms of the layout, content and functionality.”*

**Bhavesh Varsani, Admissions Process Manager**

The University’s extensive network of global partnerships with institutions and agents for applicant pathways came at a price, with the Admissions team having to deal with a large number of different applicant processes resulting from the many postgraduate course types and applicant partnerships in place.

Stu3 was selected by the University as the SITS expert consultancy partner to meet the challenge of developing a solution that could incorporate the various admission pathways and streamline the admissions processes undertaken by staff, while allowing the institution to have full control over the content of the application forms. This would not only improve the quality of admissions data being received by admissions staff but in turn improve the applicant experience by enabling a quicker turnaround time for application processing.

## The Solution



Sian Norris

*“Stu3 has a really strong knowledge of SITS and ability to build solutions. You’re safe in their hands.”* **Sian Norris, Project Manager**

Stu3 worked closely with the project team to agree on the solution: an **eVision-based suite of admissions functionality** readily accessible to applicants and agents for the submission and processing of applications to postgraduate courses and partnership-linked courses. Notable features of the delivered solution are:

- ▶ **An accessibility-compliant, high-performance, configurable IPP online application form (OLAF)** that allows existing undergraduate and study abroad applications to continue to be received without any negative impact, whilst additionally catering for postgraduate and partnership applications within the same solution in a Web Content Accessibility Guidelines-compliant fashion (WCAG 2.1 AA).
- ▶ **Email Verification** for all new applicants using the form to ensure email-address accuracy.
- ▶ **A Stu3-designed dashboard-style Agent Portal** allowing agents to: apply for courses on behalf of an applicant (automatically populating the agent details); respond to offers; view communications relating to each application that have been sent from the university; upload any required documentation; review application statuses. The Portal also allows agents to review their own agency/agent details and agents who have been assigned a supervisory role are able to create/update accounts for other agents in their agency in a user-friendly manner.
- ▶ **Course-search functionality** for partnership applications and agents creating new applications.
- ▶ **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance** ensures that consent from the applicant must be given when an agent initiates an application (via simple single-sign-on link that is emailed to the applicant) in order to allow the agent to fill out the application form and submit it. The applicant is then able to rescind consent to an agent at any time via a new Stu3 consent widget within the applicant portal and review all details of the application themselves.

- ▶ **Enhanced Applicant Portal** functionality allowing applicants to withdraw applications, respond to offers, upload documents requested by the admissions team, review email communications from the admissions team, and update their agent consent statuses at an individual application level.
- ▶ **An eVision OLAF-maintenance task for admissions staff to set/adjust course-specific questions** within the OLAF as-and-when needed with no technical assistance required.
- ▶ **Automated transfer** of data to the Course Applications (CAPs) table and associated tables on submission of the online application form. Seamlessly feeds into the institution's admissions processes without any third-party systems needed (e.g. UCAS).

## The Benefits

The new solution delivered by Stu3 has provided the following benefits to the institution:

- ▶ **Significant cost benefits** associated with the:
  - ▷ elimination of annual costs for subscription to the legacy UCAS PG solution.
  - ▷ reduction in administrative and technical support linked to:
    - ▷ reduced interface requirements - the UCAS applicants now consolidated into the pre-existing SITS Direct application solution.
    - ▷ reduced number of admissions processes.
- ▶ **Flexibility to adapt to changes:**
  - ▷ the potential impact of policy changes from a third party service provider on the admissions numbers, such as capitation fees, applicant fees, or interruption of service, can be easily met by the Admissions service via eVision tasks.
  - ▷ the ability to configure and fine-tune questions and help text on the application form to improve the application self-service process and reduce time spent by admissions staff chasing applicants for additional information.
- ▶ **A more streamlined process** for agents completing applications on behalf of applicants.
- ▶ **More accurate reporting** of expected intake numbers as a result of the new solution only allowing one offer to be accepted at a time for postgraduate courses.

The customisable components of the solution have increased the team's ability to quickly adjust their processes and meet changing business needs:

*"We are now able to adapt to changes, we can customise things the way we want them. That's made things much easier."* **Bhavesh Varsani, Admissions Process Manager**

*"It has sped up the turnaround times. Rather than having to go back to applicants for additional information, they're able to process the application straight away. The long term wins are they are able to make the decision a lot quicker than before. The information we're getting from the applicants is better than what we were getting on the UCAS form, which is one of our main driving points. Another key factor is that the application form is now easy to change, to give the user additional information on how they should submit the form or how they need to answer a question."*

**Samantha Matthews, Head of Admissions**

### **Working on the project with Stu3**

*"We knew the challenges so we weren't expecting it to be easy, however we've worked with Stu3 on our previous application forms so we knew the extent of their technical capabilities, so I wasn't really worried about it. I knew we'd be able to do it and it'd be successful."* **Bhavesh Varsani, Admissions Process Manager**

*"Stu3 are always very responsive to any questions or issues. Always clear about what they're working on and in regular contact before building anything. Their communication with the business has been really good. They have strong internal project management processes and always provide clear documentation."* **Sian Norris, Project Manager**

## Background on Client



**The University of Westminster** was founded as Britain's first polytechnic in 1838. Since then it has developed into a university that combines both metropolitan and cosmopolitan dimensions, and which is closely involved in business, professional and academic life within London, as well as overseas. The University has over 19,000 students from over 169 nations.

Let's chat.

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#### STU3 CASE STUDY

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