



A Digital University: Why Document Management is Key

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Higher education is beginning to move forward with the new age of technology, especially with many colleges and universities hosting online classes more than ever before. However, a large number of universities and colleges are still using old-school, inefficient processes to manage their paper and electronic documents. With thousands of final exams, transcripts, student records, and more, it doesn't take long for that volume of documents to become unmanageable. What if your university is already paperless and has all digital documents? That is great! However, without some sort of document management system in place to help manage the lifecycle of these documents and allow them to be easily accessed, going digital can really only help so much.

Document management and workflow solutions not only solve the paper organization issue but also simplify how each document is handled throughout its lifecycle. No more file cabinets stuffed with documents, or digital files lost in a folder whose name you can't remember - instead, you have a digital platform where every document you need is stored and organized so you can retrieve it in just a few clicks. In this blog, we will talk about why document management is so important when it comes to virtual learning and overall document management needs.

Allows for Better Student and Faculty Interaction

Think of how many students your university or college has and how many records are associated with each student — those numbers start to add up quickly. Whether a student is applying for classes or requesting a transcript, you want to be able to access their records quickly and efficiently. When you store these records in filing cabinets it could take hours for your staff to locate the appropriate document.

Even when records are digital, most of the time they are stored haphazardly without any quick process to retrieve them. By having these roadblocks, you are weakening the interactions between students and faculty. You want to make sure that documents can be found quickly and efficiently so that students can easily sign up for classes, request transcripts, etc.

By becoming paperless you will eliminate the issues associated with paper documents — but adding in the right document management system (DMS), allows you to also retrieve your digital documents faster. Most DMS have a way of indexing these documents in different ways to make them easily retrievable. In a world where almost everything is online, you want to stay proactive with your document management, especially in higher education. By streamlining your document management processes with a DMS you can cut out the wait time and allow for better student and faculty interaction.

Manage All Records Easily

As we said earlier, there are thousands upon thousands of records stored within a university or college system. These records could be stored in offsite facilities, filing cabinets, on servers, or in the cloud. Either way, these records are useless unless they are easily accessible and efficiently stored. Think about how long it takes your university to get all records for one student. For example, you need all records for a person named John Doe. However, there are 100 John Doe's at your university and now your staff has to go through each record to find the correct one. Even if your documents are all digital, if you don't have a proper document management system in place it still could take you hours to find these records. DMS usually have an indexing feature which allows you to index certain documents in efficient ways to retrieve them a lot quicker.

Security and Integrity

Security of personal information is extremely important when it comes to higher education. Most universities or colleges have certain laws or regulations they must follow when it comes to the security of certain records or documents. There are FERPA regulations that govern the privacy rights of students and parents, HIPAA laws that regulate access to private health information, and other regulations and policies. If an auditor comes, you want to make sure that not only are you able to access the necessary documents quickly but also show that they are secure.

A document management system is the best solution when it comes to keeping documents secure. You can set certain permissions, see a history of edits made to documents, and more to ensure the security of any document or record stored.

Save Money

This is a big one. The true cost of keeping paper documents is a lot more than most people think, and higher education spends a lot of money on documents alone. Whether that be printing progress reports or paying for an offsite storage facility, these numbers add up. Especially if you are still using filing cabinets. [According to a study](#), the cost to fill a regular four-drawer file cabinet is about \$25,000, plus \$2,000 per year to maintain it. Not to mention paying for an offsite storage facility is costly as well.

You might be thinking, “aren’t document management systems costly?” The answer is yes, a good document management system can be costly at first glance. But the majority of the money you spend on your DMS is upfront. Over time your university will see the ROI (return on investment) it brings when you cut out paper documents, manual document retrieval, and audit issues altogether.

Better Overall Efficiency

As a higher education institution, you want to have the most efficient processes so that your university or college can function well for everyone. When it comes to the lifecycle of your documents and overall document management, the only way to be efficient is with a document management system. Think about how many applicants your university or college gets each year. With a document management system you are able to streamline the process to make it more efficient for you and the applicant, and can allow for faster response time giving you an edge in gaining qualified applicants. With so many documents and records to keep track of, you want to streamline each document to make sure it gets to the right people at the right time.

With workflow automation, integrations, and many more features within a document management system, you will have the tools you need to create the perfect digital university for your students and your faculty.

Getting Started

Want to learn more about how a document management and workflow solution could transform your university's documentation processes? [Contact us today](#) to learn about Optix, our document management and workflow solution designed with flexibility and power to give you a paperless process. With Optix, you can reduce human error, eliminate paper and lost documents, and help your team focus on productivity.

As a document management system company we may be a little biased, but in the end, both document storage and management deal with different sets of priorities and processes. As a consumer, you must think of what system best fits your daily business

processes. [Contact us](#) to learn more about Optix, a document management and workflow solution that will improve your day-to-day processes and give you the tools to perform at your best.