



Admission & Enrolment User Experience

Overview

The Digital Solutions Service Design team conducted a UX Workshop to evaluate the current Admissions & Enrolment experience, as requested by the Admissions and Enrolment Taskforce.

Six secondary school students (beginning Year 13 with limited understanding of the university environment) completed the Admissions & Enrolments process individually while being instructed and observed by a Service Designer. The test was carried out in test system environments, though every effort was made to replicate the actual student experience in production systems.

The workshop covered the subprocesses of visiting the Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington website, registering for a Pūaha student portal account, applying for admission and completing enrolment.

Admission Process

1. Applying through the Victoria University of Wellington Website

- Testers experienced issues finding their way to apply to study via the website.
- While five testers were able to find the link to apply, only two testers used the most efficient route.
- One tester was unable to find the correct path to apply and needed instruction from the Service Designer.
- Once finding the “New Students” area, all testers were able to rapidly progress to the Pūaha sign-in page.

2. Pūaha Sign In page

- Testers experienced issues identifying the correct process to sign-up for a Pūaha account.
- The majority of testers attempted to use the sign-in option, rather than the sign-up using the email address they were provided with.
- Once the testers selected sign in with *Email or Social Account* the email verification and sign-in process progressed rapidly with minimal issues.
- Testers liked how the email connected to the system straight away.

3. Future Student Portal

- Testers were able to locate the correct Whakakauru/Admission link with relative ease. Some decisions seemed to be based around the subtext which included “Apply for Study” more than the meaning of the section title.
- Once in the My Applications tab, there was a slight delay with some students locating the Apply button, though all were successful in locating it.

4. Completing Admission Details & Submission

- Most testers were able to complete the details of the application correctly with ease. They liked the application being broken into multiple sections.
- Some testers were unsure around university terminology (pre-degree/undergraduate/postgraduate etc.).
- Multiple testers were confused by the *Qualification* section and thought it was referring to qualifications they already possessed.
- Testers were either;
 - a) unsure whether Update Postal Address was required
 - or
 - b) missed the button before returning to it
- Uploading the Passport ID was completed easily by all testers.
- Upon submission of the Admission application, testers liked the email notifications to update them on their application progress and content/wording.
- Testers were confused why they received two email notifications (Acceptance of Offer & Confirmation of Admission) simultaneously about their application.

Admission Process Summary

Testers found the Admission process straightforward overall. While some specific stages of the process proved challenging temporarily, they were all able to progress through the application rapidly. A tester remarked, "Filling it out was quite straightforward because it is all just personal information".

Main Issue Areas

1. Identifying the most efficient path to apply to study
2. Using the correct method to sign up for a Pūaha account
3. Understanding of University terminology

Enrolment Process

1. Accessing Enrolment

- Due to test system limitations, we could not simulate an email notification for enrolment and instead simulated a single-sign-on experience into the Online Enrolment System for the testers.
- At confirmation of Admission, the emails direct users to enrol.wgtn.ac.nz. We were able to test this process through simulating SSO to the enrolments system.
- However, the email also advises students that they can log into Pūaha, which we could not test due to technical limitations between test environments. If this path to enrolment is taken via Pūaha, the student visits the My Applications tab. On this tab, enrolment application and the “Enrolments are now open click here” button appears below the completed Admissions Application (and associated options), presenting the potential to cause confusion.

2. Completing Enrolment

- Some testers found the deadline information confusing as it was not relevant to their Qualification.
- Some testers found selecting a Major confusing and did not realise their Major selected in the Admission process was already added. This often resulted in them attempting to add a second major unintentionally.
- A majority of testers found the process of selecting a subject and adding courses confusing and were uncertain if they were doing it correctly. A lot of this was due to unfamiliarity with the terminology and type of courses.
- Some testers struggled with the OES interface when filtering/previewing/adding courses.
- Some testers did not understand whether the Emergency Contact section required their details or a next of kin.
- Some testers clicked the *Upload* button first instead of *Browse* when attempting to upload their Student ID photo (in the Admission process you have to click Upload first to browse to upload your ID).
- Some students noted that while the Statistics Questions at the end of the enrolment were straightforward, they may not want to complete them after working through a complex enrolment process.
- Testers were able to accept the Enrolment Agreement easily. A tester did note the format for accepting (tick field) was inconsistent with the Admission acceptance which is a drop-down function.

Enrolment Process Summary

A majority of the testers found the Enrolment process complex and demanding. All testers were able to complete their enrolment, though some testers required the use of a trial-and-error approach. A tester remarked that “The process is good, but I would definitely need to work through it with a parent or someone else”. This indicates the possibility that the combination of many minor negative experiences could cause the Enrolment process to be a poor user experience.

Main Issue Areas

1. Poor understanding of University Curriculum structure and terminology
2. Poor OES User Interface
3. Ambiguous fields causing confusion
4. Potential confusion accessing enrolment via Pūaha

Recommendations

Quick Wins

1. Consider surfacing the Apply for Admission button on the homepage/ reducing the number of clicks to access the admission application
2. Evaluate options for the redesign of the Pūaha sign-in/sign-up page
3. Combine notification emails where possible
4. Removal of the Extn field within OES to reduce confusion
5. Add help text to fields that have been identified as ambiguous
6. On each page have explanations of what stage users are at and what action is required/what they are trying to achieve.

Other Recommendations

1. Further testing and feedback targeting a diverse range of students that have recently applied and enrolled to study at Te Herenga Waka (new and returning).
 - a. Guerrilla research/feedback sessions
 - b. Persona usability testing
 - c. Survey
2. Ensure consistent presentation of functions between the two subprocesses (e.g. Accepting Offer of Place/Enrolment Agreement)
3. Complete process analysis on where admission applications choke points are occurring and improve processes.
4. Redesign the interface to guide applicants to enrolment in Pūaha under the My Applications tab when appropriate.
5. Have guiding text which explain the steps to fully enrol on both the website and Pūaha, e.g:
 - a) Apply for Admission into the Programme
 - b) Receive and Accept Offer of Place for the Programme
 - c) Once Enrolments open, select your courses
 - d) Accept Enrolment Agreement for your Courses
 - e) Receive Confirmation of Study

Considerations

The User Experience testers were a group of secondary students beginning Year 13. It can be expected that their knowledge of University processes and terminology would be low currently. While we would expect that prospective students looking to enrol would have attended University events and visits to enhance their understanding, the issue of knowledge could persist within the admission process.

Increased diversity of user testing/ cross-cultural engagement would need to be conducted to gain a better understanding of where prospective users experienced issues in the Admissions & Enrolments process. The testing group all appear to have strong intentions to attend a university, so may have demonstrated a stronger resolve when completing the process.

Contact

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