

APPLICATION STATUS MODEL AS A TOOL FOR ENSURING TRANSPARENCY IN THE ADMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (THE CASE OF THE STUDY IN UZBEKISTAN PLATFORM)

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Abstract. The article substantiates the role of the application status model in ensuring the transparency of international student admission. Using the methods of functional description and status modelling on the example of the studyin-uzbekistan.uz platform, nine statuses and the transitions between them were identified and classified according to the initiating party. It is established that the granularity of the statuses converts hidden delays into clear signals for the applicant.

Keywords: admission of international students, digitalization, transparency, application status model, stages of application review, higher education, digital services.

The expansion of academic mobility is turning the admission of international students into an independent field of activity within higher education. For an international applicant, the admission campaign often remains the first meaningful interaction with a foreign educational institution, while the lack of transparency in procedures — the absence of information about the stage at which an application stands — is one of the principal sources of applicant dissatisfaction [2]. The digitalization of admission is usually limited to transferring document submission into electronic form; such a solution removes the geographical barrier but does not in itself make the procedure transparent: an application submitted through a web form may remain as unclear to the applicant as one submitted on paper. Transparency is ensured not by the fact of electronic submission, but by the way in which the system presents the status of the application to the applicant. Although the improvement of management processes under digitalization has been studied [3:197], the manner in which the status of an application is presented has not been analysed separately. The present work is devoted to this question.

The material of the study is the studyin-uzbekistan.uz platform, intended for the admission of international students to the higher education institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan. All higher education institutions of the country are represented on the platform; according to official data, more than 360 applications from international applicants have been submitted through it [4]. The methods of functional description and status modelling were applied: each application status observable to the applicant was represented as a node and each permitted transition as a directed edge, with the transitions additionally classified according to the initiating party. The model was derived from the interface and the documented behaviour of the system and therefore describes it as it appears to the user.

The process of application review is represented by nine statuses, each of which is available to the applicant in the personal cabinet as a filter. The statuses and the transitions between them are presented in Figure 1.

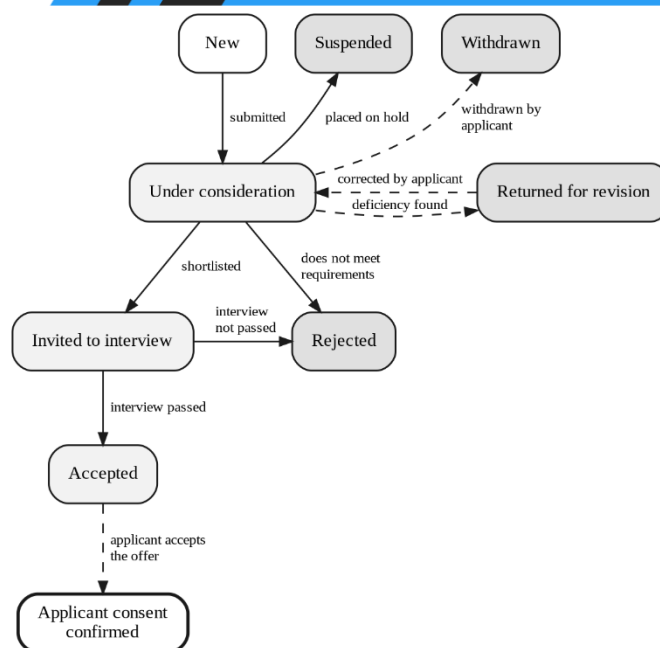


Figure 1. Statuses of application review: nine statuses and the transitions between them. Solid arrows — transitions initiated by the institution, dashed arrows — transitions initiated by the applicant

What matters is not the number of statuses in itself, but their granularity. The applicant observes not only the initial and final points of the process, but also the intermediate transitions, including those requiring action on their own part. It is precisely this granularity that distinguishes the genuine transparency of the process from a formal notification of the final decision.

Two statuses deserve particular attention. The status “returned for revision” converts a situation that would otherwise remain a hidden delay — an application halted owing to a deficiency unknown to the applicant — into a signal requiring specific action, and ensures timeliness at the stage of error correction as well [1:245]. The status “applicant consent confirmed” records the applicant’s own decision after an offer has been received and thereby closes the loop of interaction.

Classifying the transitions according to the initiating party divides the period of application review into two parts — waiting for action by the institution and waiting for action by the applicant; under traditional procedures these two kinds of waiting are not distinguished and any delay is attributed to the institution. In addition, the distribution of applications across the statuses serves as a direct measure of the throughput of the admission process. In this way, a tool introduced for the sake of transparency also becomes a management tool for the institution.

In conclusion, the transparency of international student admission is ensured not by the fact of transferring document submission into electronic form, but by the granularity of the application status model and its openness to the applicant. The analysis rests on functional description and does not include quantitative data on user behaviour — this constitutes the task of further research.

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