

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educational Management for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Students

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This is the lexicon of today's youth. Always-on connectivity and instant access to information has fundamentally changed education. And while much has been said about the use of technology to enable learning, many educational institutions have neglected their own technological capabilities and profiles in terms of the more effective and efficient management of these organisations.

With the numerous tools available to them, and with increasing student demands for more digital interaction, educational facilities are facing a technology challenge that could ultimately affect their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive environment. Whether they offer public or private, higher education facilities and universities have to review their approach to enrolment and student retention in the face of greater competition for the best students.

Key to this is improving the student experience, enabling easier digital access to everything from enrolment details to marks and automating some communications. Progressive educational facilities – locally and worldwide – are using integrated ERP solutions to achieve these goals.



### The administration challenge

One of these local institutions, The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE), part of the JSE-listed ADVTECH Group, initially turned to an integrated ERP solution to make student and institutional administration easier, and has developed the system into a holistic solution that manages the full student lifecycle. The system supports processes from recruitment to graduation, including improved marketing and sales management, as well as improved insight into recruitment, student progression and student success.

The IIE, one of South Africa's largest private providers of higher education, offers 70 registered and accredited higher education qualifications in many diverse fields through its 4 brands. With 20 geographically dispersed campuses, approximately 28 000 students (Full Time and Short Learning Programmes), and an average of 2 000 system users, the IIE's administration requirements are considerable. The organisation was previously using an internally-developed decentralised system to run all student administrative processes and a local accounting package to run financials across the Tertiary environment. Each campus had its own instance of the above software's, which meant that there were disparate databases across the brands and associated campuses. "Although this solution served its purpose well, the segregation of data presented a number of challenges and limitations around the maintenance of data and the management of multiple environments and consolidated reporting," says Michele Du Rand, Systems Innovation Manager at The IIE.



### Customer Profile

The Independent Institute of Education (IIE), a wholly owned subsidiary of ADVTECH (Ltd), is a private higher education institution operating across 20 sites offering more than 70 registered and accredited higher education programmes from Higher Certificate to Masters Level on its Varsity College, Vega, Rosebank College and DSSA campuses.

<http://www.advtech.co.za>  
<http://www.iie.ac.za>

### Project Statistics

1 Organisation  
4 Brands  
20 Campuses  
28 000 Students  
2 000 System Users

### Country

South Africa

### Software

Microsoft Dynamics AX  
Microsoft Dynamics CRM  
CAM5® Academic Management Solution

### Partner Profile

SIS Global is a Microsoft Certified Gold Partner and a leading provider of end-to-end Education Technology Solutions. Their industry focused business model, reinforced by industry professionals with a deep understanding of the business scenarios and challenges you face day-to-day, enables them to serve you in a way no other business technology provider can. They deliver industry solutions uniquely tailored to your needs.

SIS Global is the business partner of choice for solutions that enable you to move forward. To find out how they can add value to your business, contact them today.

email: [info@sisglobal.com](mailto:info@sisglobal.com)  
Tel: +27 (0) 11 367 8200  
[www.sisglobal.com](http://www.sisglobal.com)

## Microsoft Partner

Gold Enterprise Resource Planning  
Gold Customer Relationship Management

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Following a system selection process where it reviewed various products that could meet its business and technology requirements, The IIE partnered with Microsoft Gold Certified partner, SIS Global, to implement a fully integrated ERP solution based on Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Microsoft Dynamics AX and CAMS (Comprehensive Academic Management). SIS Global utilised its longstanding relationships with vendors Three Rivers and Microsoft to ensure international best practice and worked hand-in-hand with The IIE for the ultimate success of the project, whilst providing a solution tailored to meet the needs of the South African educational sector.

The project spanned a total period of 3 years, including a progressive roll out of the solution which offers a fully integrated and comprehensive profile of the student lifecycle and any interactions the student may have with the institution from admissions through to alumni management.

"Each element fits into the others to create an integrated business information system," says Robert Hawley, CEO at SIS Global. "In addition to meeting a particular customer need at The IIE, we architected this solution as a result of the need we saw in the market, combining these components to ensure that educational facilities of all sizes have access to the right solution."

### An international South African solution

The IIE required an integrated business information system that would support its overarching vision of growth, flexibility, innovation and sustainability while providing a central student management system to support the provision of quality education across multiple brands and campuses. The solution needed to facilitate the improvement of business processes and improve efficiencies while supporting academic, operations, marketing, and student relationship management, as well as financial management functionality. The central management of data had to provide a basis for improved consolidated reporting.

In addition, the solution needed to cater for compliance at a national regulatory level, but also to meet the needs of a distributed operational environment as a result of the multiple campuses of delivery, effectively requiring a common technology platform to manage the institution. "We also wanted a solution that would support our strategic theme of "IT Edge" as well as business technology strategies into the future," explains Du Rand.

Affectionately dubbed SAM, the "System for Academic Management", by The IIE, the integrated solution, offers a 360 degree view of each of the IIE's students. The management of academic information such as prior education, marks, certificates and references, as well as student interests are effectively tracked in the system. Marketers and student recruiters can use this information when segmenting audiences for communication. The solution also facilitates the ability to cross-sell and up-sell academic offerings to students.

Using Microsoft Dynamics CRM to facilitate sales and marketing initiatives to prospective students, CAMS Enterprise to manage the full registered student lifecycle, and Microsoft Dynamics AX as the basis for the end-to-end institution and financial management solution, IIE faculty and students have access to a centralised, web-based resource for accessing information about courses and students and engaging in e-learning.

"The SIS Global Education Solution offers benefits across the entire organisational and business lifecycle, and met the core strategic, business and technology requirements of The IIE. This solution enables a reliable centralised database to facilitate improved reporting and access to quality information, the collation and consolidation of all information across The IIE, centralised management of technology and infrastructure – just as the start," says Hawley.

### The birth of SAM

"SAM has helped us automate key components of the student recruitment and admissions processes. This includes the ability to manage student enquiries and interest around academic courses from a variety of sources and media," says Du Rand. "By using a process-aligned workflow, SAM has ensured that we can follow a standardised and universally accepted process to optimise conversion ratios from prospective to registered students. Once a prospective student's expression of interest has been captured in the system, it triggers an integrated academic sales and marketing process linked to collaborative technologies that assist in an enhanced student experience and a competitive differentiator for the specific brand."

"The fully integrated solution aids The IIE in the standardisation and management of the academic sale based on a tailored sales and marketing process solution with a predetermined outcome at each stage. Whether the call to action is to schedule an appointment with the prospective student or to facilitate the process of obtaining the necessary documentation required for registration, the solution provides the functionality in a flexible way," says Hawley. "This provides The IIE with the ability to improve operational efficiencies by tracking sales opportunities and funnels."

In addition, the integrated solution offers The IIE improved reporting and Business Intelligence through the centralised capture and standardisation of processing of student information.

The CAMS component of the solution provides The IIE with an online environment for course management and is completely integrated into the faculty and student portals. The solution provides a set of tools to manage both online and on-campus classes and enables students to engage with the respective brands in a self-directed and collaborative manner.

"In addition to its many other benefits, this solution provides the ability to manage the full student life cycle from admissions through to Alumni, and the ability for self-service capabilities for things like on-line admission, registration and administrative functionality, which can now all be accessed via the Student Portal. It provided an initial enabler for Asynchronous Learning Management, which is the distance and on-line teaching and learning platform, and offers features for on-line collaboration between the lecturer and student." Du Rand says.

The numbers speak for themselves: With 28 000 students hitting the student portal every day, the success of the implementation is in no doubt. With this foundation, the stage has been set for the easy addition of any components necessary to meet future business requirements.