



Students Management System

Concept note

At a first glance, a **student management system** (SMS) is a software-based tool that facilitates the management of students' records in a school or a higher education institution. Other names are given to such tools: *student information system* (SIS), *student records system* (SRS) ...

The digital era we are evolving in, imposes software based management of the multiple aspects of our daily lives, student records and information shall not be an exception. SMS tools usually facilitate: admission, enrolment, attendance, scheduling, student reporting, grading, attendance, communication, etc... These are to cite few of the features of existing systems.

Facilitating the different procedures and processes of academic institutions is achieved through normalisation, formalisation, easiness of access, speed of execution and other parameters. However, this is only the first level of what a SMS can offer in academia. Actually, with the progress of the digital era we learned the preciousness of information and of the easiness in accessing it. This also extends to the academic world. Information formalised, normalised and stored become very quickly a precious asset that helps the reform and advancement of academia. In the following we shed the light on few of the possible services that could be provided by such tools.

SMS and student progress

The available data can certainly help track student progress and provide personalised counselling and orientation services of higher quality. Actually, informed advises would become at the core of such services to the benefit of each and every student. The student himself or students, as groups, can also follow and benchmark their learning pathways and decide knowingly their next steps.

SMS and governance

Data are at the core of reports addressed to the governing body of institutions and systems. By facilitating the access to the data and probably to the detection of trends, SMS tools provide a precious service to the governing bodies leading to better informed decision making processes.

SMS and quality

The data stored in the databases of SMS tools, permit the determination and calculation of indicators. These serve in the evaluation processes and allow the enrooting of the quality culture.

SMS and recognition

Recognition is often facilitated by the availability and transparency of data and by the easiness to access such data. SMS tools form a corner stone in such a transparent information system.

In order to better serve all these purposes, SMS tools must include features and must be made as compatible as possible. Typically, it would be good for the Lebanese higher education system to have a unique student ID and to be able to track, using this ID, the learning pathway through the student management systems in different universities where she/he is enrolled. Another example would be the offering of student services based on a national student card connected to the SMS tools in the different institutions.

The seminar aims to bring together stakeholders from higher education to discuss openly and assess the capabilities of existing student management systems and how can they all profit better from such systems. In particular, the following questions need to be tackled:

- What are the major features of the popular SMS used in Europe and how they are being put to serve better higher education?
- How the tools used in the Lebanese Higher Education benchmark?
- What are the major needs from SMS tools in Lebanon?
- What is needed at the national level?
- What are the tools existing as open source in this domain and how can they be used?