GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADMISSION SYSTEM FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

Asst. Prof. Dr.Somdech Rungsrisawat[*] & Khatcharin Thapthimthet[**]

*, **Academic Services Division, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand
E-Mail: *Somdech.ru@ssru.ac.th, **Katcharin.ta@ssru.ac.th

ABSTRACT

The knowledge sharing on the topic of guidelines for the system development of the postgraduate student application for admission was performed by the KM group called "the New Student Admission" which was a unit under a supervision of the Academic Services Division. It aimed to: 1) provide guidelines for the system development of the postgraduate student application for admission of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University; 2) enhance the efficiency of the postgraduate student application for admission of the university; and 3) transform a routine work on the system development of the postgraduate student application for admission into a research. The New Student Admission group determined an action plan on knowledge management for the fiscal year 2017 to guide the practice of the knowledge sharing. The knowledge sharing of the group was performed based on sharing and exchanging of knowledge and experiences among staff members from different organizations within the university with the aim to gain techniques and know-how on enhancing work performance and satisfying the service receivers. The group also invited an expert to give suggestions on how to develop a system. This practice also led to the development of good relations between staff members of the Academic Services Division and those of the faculties and colleges.

The results of the knowledge sharing showed that the old system used for the application of admission has a drawback that the applicants had to come to apply in person at the university which costed them unnecessary time and money. Upon realizing this drawback, the group decided to develop an online system for the new student application for admission. It began with assigning the members to study the online system of other universities and sharing the information with other member. After a series of meeting in which the members exchange and share their knowledge, an online system was developed. The group asked the Graduate School to gather information of the qualifications of the applicants of each program and prepare an announcement for new student application for the postgraduate programs (singed by the Dean of the Graduate School). Then, the New Student Admission Section used the information in the announcement to set the online system on which programs would open for new student application. The application could be made at www.admission.ssru.ac.th and once the applicants had made an application online, they had to pay a fee at any counter services. The group also prepared a satisfaction survey and asked the users of the system to evaluate its efficiency so that this information could be used as sources for future development.

Keywords: System for New Students Application for Admission, Postgraduate Students, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

INTRODUCTION

The KM groups under the supervision of the Academic Services Division comprised 7 sub-groups: 1) Curriculum and teaching; 2) New Student Admission; 3) Course Enrollment; 4) Internship; 5) Academic Results; 6) Graduation Status Check; and 7) One stop service of the Office of General Education and Innovative Electronic Learning. The sub group of New Student Admission was formed from the cooperation of staff members from the Academic Services Division as well as those working at the faculties/colleges/education centers whose duties involved new student applications, the students' records, students' study plans, new student registration, courses enrollment, academic results checking, students' academic documents, and graduation.

In the fiscal year 2018, the group members worked together to review and evaluate the process of new student applications for the postgraduate programs used in the academic year 2017 and used to information from

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such practice to develop the system for the academic year 2018. The group members brainstormed to identify the drawbacks and problems of the system by sharing experiences and knowledge. As a result, guidelines for developing an efficient online system for postgraduate student application were determined and a system was developed. A new student admission process for the postgraduate programs was significant because it was used as a tool to select qualified applicants for the programs. The newly developed online system could help the selection process as required qualifications of the applications of each program were set on the system. The group also studied the problems found from the process and the system used in the new student application for admission in the undergraduate programs and used such information to improve the system for the postgraduate programs. The knowledge sharing practice on this topic was performed to respond to the university strategy no. 1 that aimed to develop the university to be a sustainable niche guru as well as to meet with the university goal on the organization management based on good governance. The members of the group consisted of academic supporting staff from 6 internal organizations including: 1) the Academic Services Division; 2) the Graduate School; 3) College of Innovations and Management; 4) College of Logistics and Supply Chain; 5) Nakkhon Pathom Education Center; and 6) the Demonstration School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

The KM group follows its practice on knowledge sharing according to the guidelines provided by the university. It had an action plan and held a series of meeting with the aim to extract knowledge from various sources as well as utilize innovations and technology to develop a new body of knowledge on the system development for the postgraduate student application for admission. It hoped that this new system could be used for new student application more efficiently and could satisfy the needs and expectations of service receivers.

OBJECTIVES

1) To provide guidelines for the system development of the postgraduate student application for admission of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

2) To enhance the efficiency of the postgraduate student application for admission of the university; and

3) To transform a routine work on the system development of the postgraduate student application for admission into a research.

RESEARCH SCOPE

1. Scope on the study site: this study focused on the development of the online system for the postgraduate student application for admission. The online system can be reached at www.admission.ssru.ac.th or www.ssru.ac.th

2. Scope on the content: the steps in developing the online system for the postgraduate student application for admission of the university included:

2.1 Developing a new system used for the postgraduate student application in the main system of the Registrar's Office by using a database of potential applicants in the postgraduate programs

2.2 Opening for the online application

2.3 Preparing a report on the number of the applicants who had paid the fee and arranging the places for written examinations and interviews (for some programs, places for practical examinations were also needed)

2.4 Conducting the interviews

2.5 Preparing a system for new students to complete their records and preparing for new student registration and reporting

3. Scope on the time period: this knowledge sharing practice was performed between April and September 2018.)
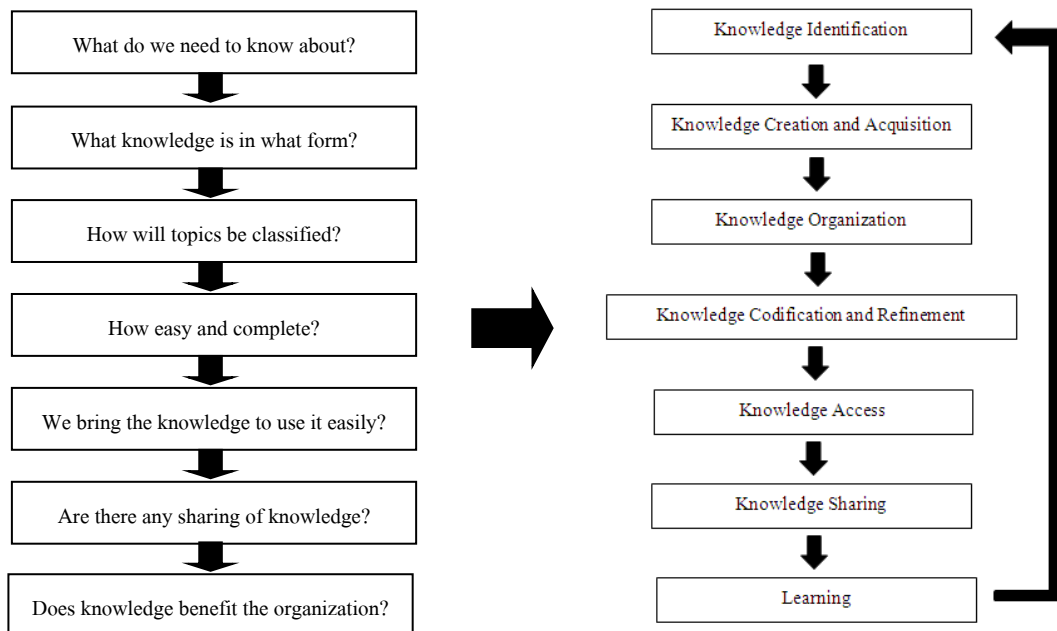
RESEARCH CONCEPT

The knowledge sharing on the system development of the postgraduate student application for admission system of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University was conducted based on a review of related literature, concepts, theories,and related research as follows:

The KM process can help the organizations to identify and manage knowledge to enhance the efficiency of its performance. The KM process consists of 7 main steps as follows:

1. Knowledge identification – At this step, the organization should consider its vision and mission as well as its goal and consider how it can achieve these. What are the problems/limitations that may hinder the organization's achievement?

2. Knowledge creation and acquisition – the organization has to try to search for knowledge that help it solve the problem. Sources of knowledge can be both inside and outside the organization.

3. Knowledge organization – At this step, the organization should organize knowledge from the previous step into groups of knowledge.

4. Knowledge codification and refinement –The organization should review and refine the knowledge to ensure that it is complete, up-to-date, and accurate.

5. Knowledge access – At this step, the organization should make the knowledge easily accessible by any related users.

6. Knowledge sharing – the organization should share the knowledge they have gained from the practice of knowledge management to others. It can be done by publishing it using a variety of forms.

7. Learning – At this step, the organization should ensure that personnel in the organization can truly use the knowledge to solve the problems in working and/or to enhance their work performance, Figure 1.

Figure 1
Knowledge Management Process [1]

A System for New Student Application for Admission – this term has been defined as follows:

Chuaratanaphong (2007) states that a system for new student application for admission refers to a complete online system that deals with all steps involving new student application for admission from taking the applications until registering new students. The system can be used for all levels of education [2].

Hiranyakarn, et al. (2008) point out that the system refers to gathering together all components of the system which have internal relationship and interaction with each other. These components will work together in unity and can achieve the determined goal [3].

Related research

Ledanan. (2016) studied on the satisfaction of applicants on the system used for new student admission for the undergraduate programs of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. This study aimed to study satisfaction of the applicants who applied through quota system, direct admission system, and under the scheme of Phetch Sunandha Scholarship and used the results to enhance the efficiency of the system to maximize the users' satisfaction ($\bar{x}$=4.50). The population consisted of 14,137 applicants who applied through the online system in

the academic year 2016. Data were collected with the use of a questionnaire surveying satisfaction on the online system. A questionnaire was designed in a form of five-point Likert Scale. The collected data were analyzed with descriptive statistics including percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

The research results showed that:

1. The satisfaction of the applicants under the scheme of Petch Sunandha Scholarship on the online system in terms of its accuracy, completeness, and being up-to-date was at the highest ($\bar{x} = 4.47$), followed by the satisfaction on its convenience ($\bar{x} = 4.47$). The satisfaction on channels used for PR was rated the lowest ($\bar{x} = 4.19$). This result was consistent with the real situation that most of the applicants mainly gained information on the new student application from the university website. They had limited knowledge on other channels used by the university. Therefore, the New Student Admission Section of the university had to promote new channels among the prospective applicants.

2. The applicants who applied through the quota system under the scheme of students with high academic results and the scheme of students with a special talent were had the most satisfaction on the system in terms of its convenience ($\bar{x} = 4.51$), followed by its accuracy, completeness, and being up-to-date ($\bar{x} = 4.49$). They had the least satisfaction on the channels used for PR ($\bar{x} = 4.27$). This was similar to the applicants under the scheme of Petch Sunandha Scholarship because they mainly received the information of the new student application from the university website.

3. The applicants who applied through the direct admission had the highest satisfaction on the item of the payment of a fee at the counter service ($\bar{x} = 4.43$), followed by the convenience of the application ($\bar{x} = 4.42$). They had the least satisfaction on the channels used for PR ($\bar{x} = 4.17$) which was similar to the first two groups of applicants. These applicants also gained information mainly from the university website and had no or limited knowledge of other channels.

METHODOLOGY

1. The group members held a meeting with an expert in the field of the postgraduate student application for admission via an online system.

The group members share their knowledge and experiences on this issue with the expert and gained some advice from her. The invited expert was Associate Professor Dr. Sajeewan Darbavasu. The suggestions from the expert included:

1) Preparing a memo asking each program to give an information on the required number and qualifications of the applicants.

2) Preparing a schedule for applications of master's degree programs and doctoral programs for each round. There should be 2 rounds for the applications.

3) Preparing an announcement for applications for the master's degree programs and doctoral programs.

4) Sending a memo informing all programs about the announcement for applications and asking personnel of each program to help promote the applications by posing the information on the program websites, as well as the Graduate School website and the university website.

5) Sending a memo informing a schedule for the applications of each round and the announcement for applications to the New Student Admission Section so that such information would be used to set the online system for the applications.

6) Opening the online system for the applications at www.admission.ssru.ac.th, Figure 2.

Figure 2
A focus group with an expert

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2. The group members held a meeting to share and exchange knowledge among the members.

The main goals of the development of the new system were to make it convenient for the applicants to apply for the programs they wish to study and to access to as many target groups as possible. The group consults the records of the previous applicants during the past three years and found that the number of the applicants had increased every year. The group found that the main drawback of the old system was that the applicants had to come to apply in person at the university and most of them did not live in Bangkok. This caused them time and money to travel. Other problems related to the old system included that the applicants did not know information on the schedule for the applications and other related information. Therefore, the number of the applicants did not meet with the plan of each program. Some of the group members shared that other universities had been using an online system to take the applications and had been allowing applicants to pay a fee at the bank. Such practices were convenient for the applicants as they did not have to come to the university. Finally, the group members agreed to develop an online system to take the applications for the postgraduate programs by using the online system used for the undergraduate programs as a guideline. The newly developed system had been implemented since the academic year 1/2018 and had provided satisfactory outcomes which was evidenced by the increased number of the applicants. The summary of the steps for the system development is displayed below, Figure 3.
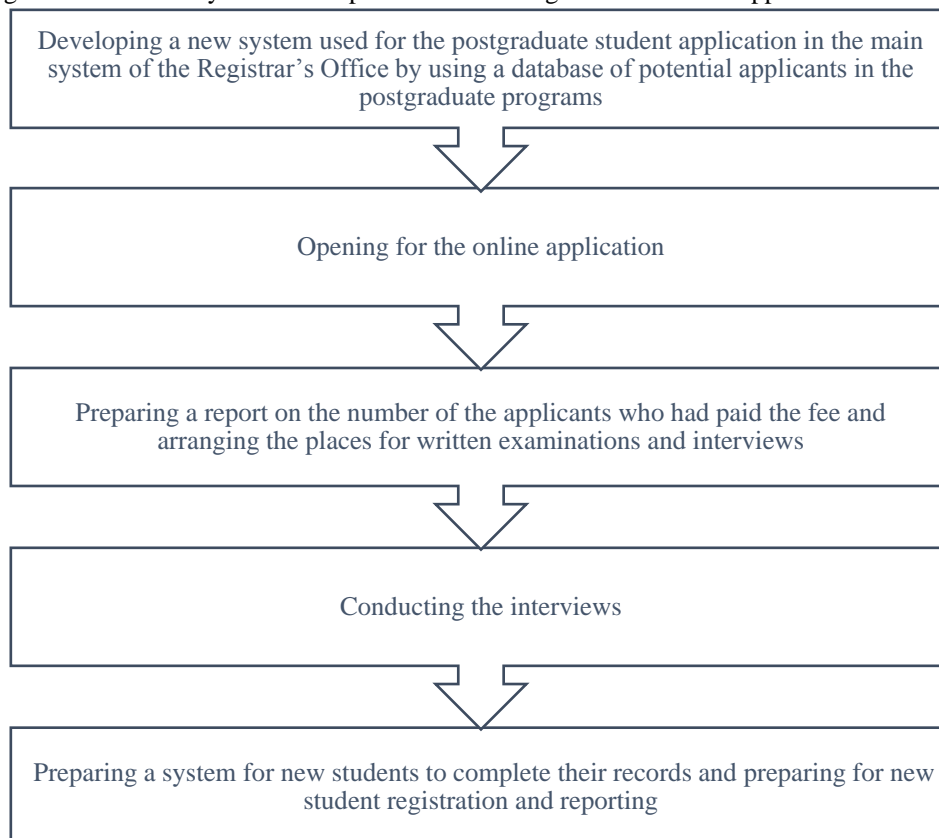
Figure 3

A focus group between the group members

Figure 4

The guidelines for the system development for the Postgraduate Student Application for Admission

Developing a new system used for the postgraduate student application in the main system of the Registrar's Office by using a database of potential applicants in the postgraduate programs

Opening for the online application

Preparing a report on the number of the applicants who had paid the fee and arranging the places for written examinations and interviews

Conducting the interviews

Preparing a system for new students to complete their records and preparing for new student registration and reporting

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CONCLUSION OF THE KONWLEDGE SHARING RESULTS

The results of the knowledge sharing on the online system development for the postgraduate student application for admission can be concluded as follows:

The old process (Apply in person)	The new process (Apply via the online system)	Improvement based on the suggestions from the expert
Start → Preparing a schedule for new student application → Open for the applications → Coordinate with other organizations in promoting the application → Applicants applying in person → Taking applications → Preparing a report on the number of the applicants and preparing the place for examinations → Announcing a list of the qualified applicants → Sending the report on the number of the applicants to the program and asked for the examination committee → Preparing a schedule for qualified applicants	**Start** → (1) Preparing a schedule for new student application → Preparing an announcement for the new student application → Sending the announcement to related organizations → (2) Taking applications via the online system → (3) Preparing a report on the number of the applicants and preparing the place for examinations → Announcing a list of the qualified applicants online → (4) Conducting examinations → (5) Announcing the successful applicants online → Informing successful applicants for new student registration → **End**	1. Preparing a memo asking each program to give an information on the required number and qualifications of the applicants

2. Preparing a schedule for applications of master's degree programs and doctoral programs for each round. There should be 2 rounds for the applications.

3. Preparing an announcement for applications for the master's degree programs and doctoral programs.

4. Sending a memo informing all programs about the announcement for applications and asking personnel of each program to help promote the applications by posing the information on the program websites, as well as the Graduate School website and the university website.

5. Sending a memo informing a schedule for the applications of each round and the announcement for applications to the New Student Admission Section so that such information would be used to set the online system for the applications.

6. Opening the online system for the applications at www.admission.ssru.ac.th.

7.Preparing a report on the number of applicants, arranging the examination |

The old process (Apply in person)	The new process (Apply via the online system)	Improvement based on the suggestions from the expert
		places, and scheduling date and time for the examinations on the online system.
Preparing documents for the interviews and practical examination		8. Announcing a list of qualified applicants at www.reg.ssru.ac.th.
↓		9. Conducting interviews. Details of the place of interviews were posted at www.reg.ssru.ac.th.
Announcing a list of successful applicants		10. Sending an information of successful applicants from the interviews to the New Student Admission Section who would recode this information on the registration system.
↓		
Informing related persons about the announcement of successful applicants		
↓		11. Preparing an announcement of a list of successful applicants and a schedule for registration and reporting as well as a summary of tuition fees and posting at www.reg.ssru.ac.th.
Preparing a memo informing a list of successful applicants to the Academic Services Division		
↓		
Informing successful applicants for new student registration and reporting at the Academic Services Division		12. Announcing a list of successful applicants at www.reg.ssru.ac.th.
↓		13. Taking new student registration and reporting at the Academic Services Division.
End		14. Preparing a report on the number of the applicants for the postgraduate programs.

The group members have found some problems after the implementation of the new system in semester 1/2018 that it taking time for competing the information on the system, instability of the system, incompleteness of the information provided by the applicants. All of these problems caused delay to the application process. The group members have learnt from these problems and tried to find out the ways to solve these problems. They have also used this information to improve the system. Major improvement was that the group set the required qualifications for the applicants in the system therefore only qualified applicants could apply online. Besides the group also prepared a manual for the online system which explain the user how to use the system step by step.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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